Journal of The Arts

The Watermark

Volume 20 | Spring 2013

Write on the Dot

Dorchester writers gather
to read and share creative work
at various bars in Dorchester.

www.WriteontheDot.blogspot.com

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The Watermark

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Volume 20 | Spring 2013

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Submissions:
138 Poems | 42 Short Stories
11 Essays | 29 Art & Photography
projects.
We accepted 30% percent
of our submissions this spring.
Check out our website: TheWatermarkJournal.com
Thanks to all those that participated and gave time to producing this journal.

A little about the Watermark: We, your humble volunteers listed above, accept submissions year round. Our fall issue deadline November 1st. Our spring issue deadline is April 1st. If you want to submit your work, take a look at the submission guidelines on our website. Independently published since 1994, The Watermark is run by graduate and undergraduate students at UMass Boston. We are funded by UMB's yearly $15 Student Media Fee. This journal cannot be sold or reproduced in any marketplace, without express permission from the Student Activities Office at UMass Boston. The Watermark reserves the right to distribute all of the material printed in this journal in any conceivable format. Individual artists and writers are free to share or sell the work they have printed in this journal on their own initiative. Let's always remember how to hunger and hustle, to never be bored, and to always be simple. Have you ever had a simple salad, only vegetables, no dressing? It's delicious. It's been fun reading and discussing the writing and artwork submitted. We could only afford to print 144 pages. We put a lot of thought into each piece that we accepted. Three people read and approved each entry You are a relentless person to have read through this malarkey. I hope you enjoy reading the work collected here in now to hurry off to print.

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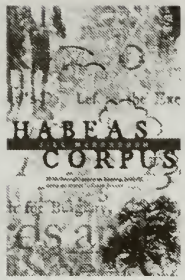
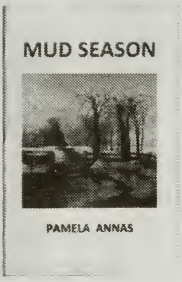


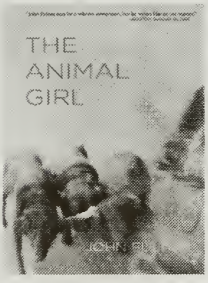
Habeas Corpus - Jill McDonough

"McDonough's poems stretch and expand the sonnet form. Through its taut, refining lens, she shows us the countless ways in which a life can end... Part death count, part historical panorama, part impassioned plea, but for the most part a collection of striking, absorbing poetry, in this work McDonough has produced a unique and necessary debut." —Sarah Crown Poetry London



Mud Season - Pamela Annas

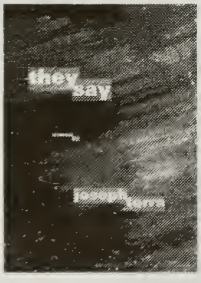
"What resonates most clearly and powerfully in Pam Annas's *Mud Season* is her ability to assume a variety of distinctive voices, and in so doing, speak from a variety of experiences. This is made possible because of the poet's good ear for a diction that is not present simply to announce or decorate or please, but instead to carefully lure the reader into the lives she inhabits in order to tell a fresh and illuminating story of who we are." —Bruce Weigl



The Animal Girl - John Fulton

"These short stories and novellas are crystallized fiction that manage to tell complete tales in a few pages.... Fulton does a careful, detailed job in limning the frustrating emotional life of his characters." —Library Journal

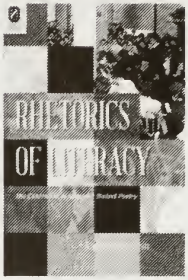
"In their exploration of loss, Fulton's moving vignettes offer glimpses into all that is painful and hopeful and human." —Booklist



They Say - Joe Torra

A working-class, first-generation Italian family living in the Boston area in the first half of the 20th century. struggles over oldest brother Louie, whose early artistic genius and political passions deteriorate into delusion and severe mental illness. Narrated by various siblings in this sprawling family, their stories have the intimacy and drama of a conversation told around the kitchen table—and like any living, breathing family tale, the brothers' and sisters' stories intersect, run parallel, contradict each other, fill in each other's gaps.

Rhetorics Of Literacy - Nadia Nurhussein



"*Rhetorics Of Literacy* combines book history, media studies, and African American studies in new and compelling ways. It is deeply historical, offering a wealth of contextual material—the best kind of literary history that pays close attention to form. In general, Nadia Nurhussein combines fine close readings and compelling narrative history, while showing great range in her move from the nineteenth century to modernism." —Gavin Jones, Stanford

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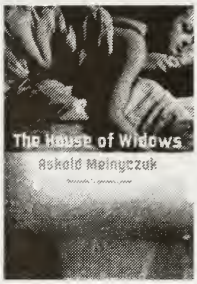
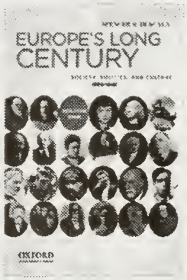
The House Of Widows - Askold Melnyczuk



"The House of Widows is a dazzling novel, rich with fascinating characters, whose search for love and truth carries them from country to country, uncovering terrible secrets, and in the course of their journey revealing much about the history of the last half-century."

—Howard Zinn

Europe's Long Century - Spencer di Scala



The rise and fall of communism led historians to conclude Europe's twentieth century history is solely predicated upon politics. but Professor Spencer di Scala argues Europe's most recent century was not a short century. Di Scala's work explores "the trends and main issues we are coping with today (and their) deep roots: science and its dilemmas, migrations, ethnic and religious conflicts, the hopes and disullisions of an integrated Europe in a multipolar world."

–Giuliano Amato, former Prime Minister of Italy

Weimar Germany - Paul Bookbinder

The Republic Of The Reasonable, only 160 pages, offers an outstanding account of the constant political revolutions, the worst inflation in Western Civilization's history, and even the often forgotten accomplishments of the Weimar Republic. The Weimar period in German history extended from 1919 to 1933. The Republic is often treated only as a preface to the study of the rise of Fascism in Germany and this book seeks to correct the balance, exploring Weimar for what it was as well as where it led.

by Ivana Ivanova

Homewrecker

I whistled as I walked down the street, kicking up piles of leaves as I went. It was Thursday. On Thursday afternoons, I went to see my mistress.

I took the steps two at a time up to her tiny loft apartment. I unlocked the door silently and crept in. Johanna stood near the window, staring out, deep in thought, with her back to me. I came up behind her and wrapped my arms around her waist. She jumped.

"Charles!" she exclaimed. "Never do that again! You scared the hell out of me!" I smiled sheepishly.

"Sorry, babe. Didn't mean to." I rested my head on her shoulder and after a few seconds I felt her relax and put her arms around me with a sigh.

"How much time do we have?" she asked. Annoyance flared up in me. She asked the same question every time even though the answer never changed.

"I have to be home by six-thirty," I replied mechanically. She sighed again.

"I guess we'd better get down to business then," she said. I lifted my head and shrugged. I was still annoyed and in no mood to make love. However, she was right. We only had an hour, and not a lot to talk about anyway.

Half an hour later, we lay in her bed together. She sat up to light a cigarette. I hated this habit of hers, and she knew it. I cleared my throat and raised my eyebrows. She paused and held my gaze defiantly for several moments, then groaned and put the cigarette and lighter away. We sat in silence.

"I have to go," I said. She nodded. I got up and dressed. "Bye." She waved. As I was exiting, I noticed her moving towards her pack of cigarettes.

Several hours later, I was lying in a similar fashion at home with my wife, except that Lisa had curled herself close against me in a way Johanna never did. I was half asleep when I realized she was speaking to me.

"Honey?" she was saying. "I – sometimes I feel like you're not all with me. I – don't know. Maybe it's just me." I opened my eyes to see her eyes fixed on a spot on the wall to my left and chewing on her bottom lip. She looked up at me, paused, then ventured quietly, "Remember when we were wild?" I smiled. She continued even more quietly, "Remember that time we did it in your parents' kitchen? And there was that time in your car, in the airport parking lot, when we went to pick Jackie up." She rested her chin on my chest. "We don't do things like that anymore." As I watched her speak, a wicked idea suddenly came forth through my post-coital haze. I bit my tongue to stop myself from speaking before I had figured out the best way to phrase my proposal.

"There is something I have always wanted to do," I began tentatively. She nodded, urging me on. I hesitated artificially. "No, never mind. You wouldn't want to do it."

"No, no!" she exclaimed, lifting her head so that our eyes were level. "You can tell me anything. You should know that."

"You're sure?" Lisa nodded vigorously. "I have – well, I have always wanted to have a threesome." There was a pregnant pause.

"Okay," Lisa finally said. I blinked in surprise.

"Really?"

"Yes. If it would make you happy, anything." She pulled herself up and planted a kiss on my cheek. I smiled and closed my eyes, planning how to convince Johanna to join us as I drifted into a contented sleep.

She continued even more quietly, "Remember that time we did it in your parents' kitchen?

On Tuesday, I got my chance to talk to Johanna. We lay across her couch, flipping through the television channels.

"We don't really have fun anymore," I said. She tilted her head to look at me.

"Are you saying we should break up?" she asked.

"No, no, no," I replied. "I just – there's something I want to try. I think it could be fun."

"What is it?" I could see that her interest was piqued.

"A threesome?" Johanna was silent. Finally, she answered hesitantly.

"Okay." I raised my eyebrows. This was so much easier than I thought

it would be.

"Okay?"

"Okay." She sat up. "Have you decided with who?" I hesitated. I hoped she would not get upset.

"Well, I was thinking it would be easiest with Lisa." Johanna looked surprised.

"Is she down with that?" she asked. I nodded. "You didn't tell her about me, did you?"

"No. I just told her that I have a friend from work who might be game," I said. Johanna nodded thoughtfully.

"Well, if you can orchestrate it, sure. Why not," she said. I grinned and leaned in to kiss her.

Two weeks later, on Saturday night, Lisa, Johanna, and I went out to dinner together. The atmosphere at the table was a little tense. The two women were polite yet not totally comfortable with one another. After dinner, we took a cab back to my and Lisa's house. Once inside, I took each of them by the hand and led them silently to the bedroom. I had taken the time earlier to arrange candles around the room and cool a bottle of champagne. Lisa and Johanna sat on the edge of the bed as I poured out a glass for each of us. When I returned to them, I saw that they were holding hands. I smiled inwardly and hoped that the night would be a success. We made a toast to ourselves, then began to undress.

It took the better part of an hour to get all of us bare and under the bedsheets. I lay between Lisa and Johanna as we got more comfortable with the sensation of doing with three people what had up to this point been a two-person activity. As the night wore on, the two women became more adventurous and I took a more passive role, enjoying the unprecedented success of my plan to have both my wife and my mistress at the same time. At one point, I suddenly realized that I had been excluded from their play. Lisa and Johanna were completely focused on each other and seemed to have forgotten me. I was happy enough just to watch.

That was six months ago. That night had consequences I never foresaw. Not only did Lisa leave me, she left me to be with Johanna. She thanked me for initiating the event that allowed her to realize what was the real reason that she had felt distant from me and what would make her truly happy. Every month I receive a postcard from her, along with an alimony check, from a different country, with a short greeting on the back. She assures me that she and Johanna are, indeed, truly happy.

Raphael Bliss

Emma's Sonnet

Remember the very first night we danced?
At Speakeasy, cowboys sprang to buy you
drinks. I stood by a bar bench scribbling
autumn drums. You caught me gazing and crossed
your eyes, all-containing, universal.
You laughed and smashed past my pretense and snatched
my notebook, and you spun our gypsy hips
out to Sixth Street. You struck brilliant fires
everywhere that night. I sketched your image
in ash on every sidewalk. In midnight
lightening, all-containing, universal,
you appear and leave a blinding absence
    in love. I still sketch with slag from electric
    memories struck when our blaze grew epic.

The Closet Under the Stairs

Do you know Christine?
She's six-foot-two,
wears a red dress that brings out her curves,
carries a black purse encrusted with diamonds.
We met at a café.
She smashed her glass of wine into the table,
stood up, lifted my shirt,
and slit a shard of glass
through the skin over my stomach.

I keep a loaded gun
in the closet under the stairs.
Next Thursday
I'll lift it to my temple.

Do you know Christine?
She's a short woman
sitting behind a desk.
I can't tell whether her smile
is genuine or forced.
She screams at me to sit.
I do as she says.
I don't hear what else she says.

I keep a helium machine
in the closet under the stairs.
There's a mask attached
to a canister of gas.
If I sit still long enough
and breathe,
My thoughts will gush
out of my head.

Do you know Christine?
I met her at a bar table
in a café.
I brought her to my bedroom
and slid my hand
down the back of her neck.
She arched her back and
lumps of muscle popped out,
pushing into a wall of flesh.
Little hairs burst out,
enveloping the wall of flesh.
The head twisted around
and smiled at me
through its beard.

I keep an instruction manual
in the closet under the stairs.
It has directions for how to construct
a helium machine
if you have cancer or syphilis.
The parts are very expensive.

Do you know Christine?
It's the name of an island
I own
off the coast of the Congo.
Pretty boys come
and lie with me
and we look up into the sky
and wonder what the constellations mean.
One night, one said to me,
"I wish we could build a ship
and go to that star."

I keep a lock on the door
of the closet under the stairs
so no one knows
it's empty.

Kara Wooten

The Public Transportation Epidemic

Public transportation claims commuters like an epidemic. Ticket prices continue to rise, and the trains, buses, and subway cars, continue to deteriorate. Public transportation has transformed from a convenient way into the city to a massive migraine for those who deal with it daily. Everyone I see on the trains these days looks vacant and depressed. Right now, the MBTA consists of the subway, buses, and commuter rail. A monthly subway pass costs about $60 dollars and, fortunately, is relatively cheap. But the quality of the service keeps deteriorating.

Busses throw you around, stop short, and then speed back into traffiic. The Commuter Rail has eight zones and prices vary, depending on the zone you depart from. A monthly pass for the communter rail in some places is over $260 dollars. At that high of a price, the least they could do is let people park at the station for free. Nope, of course not, $4 dollars a day. Thinking about not paying for your parking spot? Don't do it. They send you your fine in the mail. The commuter rail first eats up your pocketbook and then it swallows you whole when it decides to delay, cancel, or jam pack trains.

I usually depart from the fifth or sixth zone depending on if I decide to take the ultra slow Franklin/Forge Park line or the Providence line. The decision usually depends on whether or not I am in a rush or what train line departs later.

One morning I choose the Mansfield stop on the Providence line because it was cold and there is a quaint ticket and coffee shop there. I always arrive at the train station ten to fifteen minutes early, because unlike people who have monthly passes I buy a single ride tickets. While I waited that morning I saw so many depressed people that I want to blow my brains out. Men and women of all ages waiting in line to go to their nine-to-five day jobs that most of them despise. Women yelling into their cell phones at kids disobeying the babysitter trying to get them ready for school is often a conversation I overhear.

Another popular conversation is sports. Besides weather, it's probably the only other topic that at least three fourths of the crowd can chime in on. I glance at them and don't even see faces, just a group of miserable people. I tell myself I will never turn into one of those morning commuters. I tell myself that I will always keep my physical and mental appearance up to par. Then I frantically keep talking to myself pondering whether or not these people said the very exact thing I said. As I am freaking out about whether or not I am seeing a glimpse of myself in a distant future, I look up and read the alert being posted on the announcement board. "Train to Boston in 27 Minutes" it reads. *Are you serious?* I say to myself as I hear the crowd of already miserable people go into an uproar. The train is supposed to arrive in three minutes and now that it is delayed twenty-seven minutes not only will I arrive late to Boston and miss half of my first class, I am going to be on an overcrowded train.

The train comes thirty-one minutes later and is completely full. I somehow manage to find a three seater with one available spot. I push my way through the irritated crowd and signal that I want to take the seat. Instead of just sliding over, an over- weight business man lifts his briefcase and then lifts himself up so I can sit in the middle. I sit down and slide my backpack between my legs. I try to take off my coat and manage to elbow the lady sleeping next to me. She was drooling, so I guess elbowing her wasn't all that bad. At least now she will have time to fix her make up. I know I shouldn't complain about being sandwiched in between an overweight business man and a tired-looking old lady considering that half of the people that got on the train with me had to stand the rest of the trip.

I hear the conductor snipping away tickets. "Hello," I say to him with a grin and by his reaction he has not seen one of these on his typical morning commute shift. "Well, hello. Ticket please," he says back to me. I hand him my Zone 6 ticket and he winks at me as he grazes his way to the next seat of people meandering through all of the standing people. "What a creep," I think to myself. He seemed like such a nice guy. By the time we arrive at the Route 128 stop, which is only two stops away from when people start moseying off the train, the train has reached full capacity. The conductors have to turn people away at Route 128 and make an announcement that the train is going to skip the next stop and go straight to Ruggles.

As the train is trying to depart from Route 128, it transforms into a zoo. Instead of the miserable and tired-looking people that are on the train, vicious and rabid men and women start going berserk. I literally hear everything from "I'm going to sue the MBTA" to "I'm going to murder someone" coming from people's mouths. At this point, I can't even handle what commotion that is going on around me. I put my ear plugs in and listen to the electronic artist Shpongle to put me in an uplifting trance. At Ruggles, about a fourth of the people get off the train and head to work. At the next stop, Back Bay, about half of the people get off the train. Finally at the final stop, South Station, I get off with the rest of people who remain on the train. Elevated from my happy trance, I walk towards to the entrance of the Red Line to see mounds of people losing their shit because service on the Red Line is experiencing heavy delays. I laugh and embrace the chaos.

Benjamin Devonshire

Seven for Snow

Snow woke up like she did any other day—eager to meet the world, eager to see what it had in store for her. She didn't really believe in *carpe diem*, or fate for that matter, but she thought putting the two together would be a good place to start.

The sun wasn't up yet, and the outside was still a fuzzy blue. She liked that color. Her apartment was small—only a few rooms—but she was very proud of it and of all the furniture, the paintings, and the knick-knacks from *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* on the table tops in the living area—none of which she bought herself.

Connected to the living area is a small kitchen almost pushed up against a corner, between the two areas a small dining table with four chairs surrounding it. She didn't put on the light. She never does; she likes the darkness, the silence, she feels at home surrounded by its secrets. She yawned deeply and began brewing tea as she stared at the stillness outside. It was quiet, not too quiet, just quiet enough. She smiled dreamily and began to hum, not to any particular tune, dreaming of a far away castle and a charming prince. Her focus on the world around her sharpened when she sipped the tea, and she realized that she was not dressed. she hurried back to her room with the tea cup and placed it on her dresser.

Her clothes were folded neatly on the chair next to her desk, and beneath them was a bag carefully placed and full with everything she thought

Kisa Zhang

she might need for the day: papers, books, a CD walk-man, pencils, pens, tape recorder, and a stack of notebooks. Taking another sip of her tea, she marches over to the chair, takes off her cotton pajamas and folds them on the bed. She looks at herself in a full-size wall mirror. Naked, she considers her milky pale skin in contrast to her coal black hair. She stares passionately into her face, and prays that today her fairy tale story will have a happily ever after. Then she puts on the men's nursing scrub pants, yellow, and her plain royal blue tee-shirt that she laid out the night before.

"There...much better." Snow said aloud, quite satisfied with her outfit, even if it was a size to big for her.

She didn't like to use a lot of make up, just lipstick and some eye shadow, that's all. Though naturally beautiful, she had an ugly duckling complex since she had been an ugly child young. She had not noticed yet she became the beautiful swan. She stared into this mirror, still half sleeping in her dream of fairy tales.

"Mirror, mirror, on the wall, who's the fairest one of them all?" she half whispered.

"Me!" A loud shout came from the bathroom door.

Rita, a well-curved, golden-tanned woman in a very suggestive black business suit, stood in the doorway blowing cool air in a hot cup of tea.

"Oh! Rita, you scared me," she squeaked.

"Sorry, honey, didn't mean to," she said. "Oh honey, when are you going to stop wearing those clothes?"

"When they stop being so damn comfortable!" she exclaimd.

Rita rolled her eyes and they both walked into the living area, sat on a very old but incredibly worn in love seat, and turned on the television. The weather report said it'd be a sunny day, still she thought she aught to wear her jacket just in case. Snow was excited, eager even, because today she and Rita were going to start thier new jobs at the Metro Medical Center.

The trip was long, not because of traffic, there was barely any, but she couldn't sit still. She changed the radio every few seconds, and intermittently sang along with snatches of songs. She knew that she would bore Rita with her endless babble. She knew this because she always babbles a thousand times faster when she gets excited. She did it for her last twenty birthdays and various holidays, her father's wedding, and every first date she had, which is probably why she hasn't had a steady boyfriend since high school. Rita just smiled and focused on driving. They got there with plenty of time to spare and both did a quick check in the mirror in unison.

She couldn't help but to smile as she put on her red rose lip stick.

Rita's walk was very sassy, she thought—a lot of hip action, and sway. She notices it when Rita is nervous. She came up behind Rita and gently placed her right hand on Rita's right shoulder, giving her a half hug.

"It's going to be just fine, Rita, we're going to be fine," she said reassuringly.

The Medical Center didn't seem overly busy, but Snow noticed the wear-and-tear of the rug. Rita confidently introduced herself, and was cut off by one of the two small older women at the desk.

"Of course. You girls must be the new doctors. Right this way," one of the ladies said. "Ann, I'll be right back."

The other woman looked quite cross too, and replied, "Mary! Of course I don't have any plaque!" But Mary just waved her hands and walked around the counter, picking up two green folders as she went.

"Are you Rita Montoya?" Mary asked impatiently,

"Yes..."

"Good, good, and you must be..." the old woman paused for a moment and stared intently at something on a green folder she was holding, a smile began to wriggle its way across her old leather face, she looked up. "Is your name really Snow White?"

"Yes...my name is Snow White..." she always thought of herself as a broken record when she met new people "Yes, like the fairy tale. My parents had a cruel sense of humor ... Ha-ha ... yeah, I know, funny."

Her parents, Brian and Samantha White, had gone to see the movie when it was re-released in theaters and that's where she was concieved. Nine months later they thought it was fitting for the memories to call their new baby Snow. So she was christened Snow White. Still, she liked the name, so she put up with the comments, and she pressed on.

Soon after Snow turned eight, her mother died of cancer. Snow would visit her in the hospital everyday after school, and play board games. Those were her most vivid memories with her mother, the ones of her in a hospital bed. Ten years later her father remarried, not to an evil witch, but to a kindergarten teacher, whoes only real fault was that she was a terrible speller. "A witch needed to be a good speller to write in the spell books," Snow thought and smiled. The two became fairly good friends, even though Snow got nervous whenever her step-mom made apple pie.

Mary handed the two women green folders, and said "Follow me." Snow

thought the two receptionists were cute, Mary especially because she reminded Snow of a penguin. She gave Rita a happy little smile. Mary gave them a detailed tour of the grounds.

"This is the physical therapy center," Mary said. "You'll need to find doctor...doctor... Dr. Sophin. He will be your head doctor, Miss Montoya. He should be right over there in his office." She pointed weakly to a door on the other side of a small blue lobby.

Rita followed her finger, walking with the same sassy steps. Snow smiled a half-smug smile.

"Shall we, dear?" Mary said pointing to an elevator.

"Here we are, D wing, this is going to be your new little slice of heaven," Mrs. Ross said. "This'll be your home away from home."

The old elevator clanged its way up three stories to the psychward. She could smell it before she even stepped out of the shaft, a mixture of hand sanitizer, wax floor, medications, breakfast carts. She couldn't get enough of that smell. The doors squealed open to a small desk and a few nurses reading charts.

"Well here you go, Dr. White, hope everything is to your liking. I really should get back to Ann."

Snow White floated out of the elevator, not even hearing Mary's goodbye, and up to a small counter where a large woman fussed with papers. Snow whispered a hello, but it went unheard. she coughed. "Excuse me," she said in a more confident voice.

"Oh sorry, didn't see you there. What can I do for you ma'am?" The large woman smiled a warm smile.

"I'm Dr. White," Snow said handing over her the green folder.

"Oh yes," the large woman exclaimed, and she smiled warmly. "I'm Mrs. Ross. Okay, let me introduce you to your new best friends."

Snow followed her down the hall past several corridors with bold letters printed above the archway entrance.

"Here we are, D wing, this is going to be your new little slice of heaven," Mrs. Ross said. "This'll be your home away from home."

Mrs. Ross opened a door into a plain office with one desk, one filing cabinet, and one window. Snow was already thinking of which color she was going to paint the walls. "Maybe pink... no blue," she thought, then she began to wonder what kind of blue, there was so many to choose from.

"Your keys are in the desk."

Snow came back from a rainbow of designs and nodded out a smile. She followed Mrs. Ross back out and down the hall to the next door, which had a little window in the middle of it.

"Mr. John Thompson is in room one," Mrs. Ross said. "He is suffering from severe social anxiety; freaks out around new people, so the first couple of weeks make sure you have Henry or Steve with you when you go in there."

Snow looked inside the room though the small porthole and saw a middle-aged man sitting in the far corner drawing something on an easel. "Bashful, how cute," she thought. The next door was on the other side of the hall.

"This is Mr. George Simms. He is suffering from delusions of grandeur; thinks he's a famous doctor solving a cure for cancer."

At the last door Snow begins to wonder if this is some twisted cosmic joke.

Inside, a fuzzy old man scribbled notes on clips of papers, surrounded by mounds of even more paper. "Where were you 15 years ago, Doc?" At the next door Mrs. Ross hands Snow the first three folders out of the stack she cairred.

"This is William,'Billy,' Bergin. He has severe mental retardation, a five-year old brain capacity. But he wouldn't be here if he wasn't so damn strong. Don't worry, he's very rarely a problem, still to be on the safe side have someone with you."

On the other side of the small window a large man holding a teddy bear slept on a big bed, probably dreaming big dreams. "Sweet dreams, Dopey."

As they neared the next door Mrs. Ross whispers, "Mr. Tom Allan, a World War Two vet, meanest sum-bitch, you'll ever meet, has shell-shock most of the time, but the other times thinks he's a prisoner of war."

A very old bald man, sat in a rocking chair and stared out a window. "Don't be Grumpy, Mr. Allan." A muffled noise came from down the hall. Snow turned to Mrs. Ross with a concerned look on her face.

"That noise is coming from the next room, Matthew Joseph, a man with two names and half the brains or so he says. He's a comedian with extreme bipolar disorder. You'll like him, just keep your distance." Inside a wild hair man is prancing around the room, dancing. Snow smiled and thought, "He sure does seem Happy."

"Mr. Quinn is next. He's self-admitted. Narcolepsy. Afraid he'll fall asleep somewhere he shouldn't."

When Snow looked inside she almost didn't see the small Asian man curled up in the corner of the room. "Sleepy," she thought.

At the last door Snow begins to wonder if this is some twisted cosmic joke. Sneezy. There's no way.

"Scott Jones," Mrs. Ross said, and handed the remaining folders to Snow. "A mysophobe."

Snow snorted. It was a loud, hard laugh that made her cheeks turn pink and made Mrs. Ross take a step back. Snow White had her seven dwarves, seven crazies, and now she couldn't stop laughing. From down the hall a tall, sharp-eyed man heard Snow and came running.

"What's going on? What's the matter?"

Snow could barely see, her eyes watered up so much.

"Are you alright, Dr. White?" Mrs. Ross asked with a very worried look on her face.

Snow opened her mouth, hoping to find the right words to explain her hysterics. Instead the room went fuzzy and the air became stale. She couldn't feel her legs, and she began to fall. A man shouted something she couldn't understand. Then it was like someone turned off the lights.

Christine Norton

The Crash

Jenny went through her mail. No Christmas cards today. She had two so far and neither were from her sisters, even though Jenny made sure to send them one every year. For that matter she never received a telephone call or a visit from them, except when they wanted something. Rebecca and her daughter, Reagan, loved to do the pop-in on people, then say how dirty the house was. Eileen was all wrapped up in her own life and sad marriage. She doted on her children and her grandchildren. Jenny was never invited to any family functions thrown by either sister.

A roaring fire was starting to die in the white stone fireplace. Her two cats, Max and Benjamin, lay curled up on the braided rug in front of the warm embers. Jenny liked days like this, home in her warm and cozy apartment with her two cats, Max and Benjamin, watching the snow falling.

Jenny had never bought a lottery ticket in her life, but yesterday on a whim, she bought one. When she turned on the TV that morning she was surprised to discover that she had won five thousand dollars! She first picked up Max and twirled around the room singing the song, "We're in the money!" Then she picked up Benjamin, but put him down almost immediately because he hated to be held and started to make that scream as if he is being killed. Finally Jenny could pay off her credit cards, and still have some money left over for something nice.

Jenny had been living alone ever since her widowed mother died a little more than a year before. Jenny missed her terribly and thought of her often. Jenny had never gotten married--she never wanted to be a wife. She was, however, a mother to her two cats whom she cherished. She didn't have much of a social life and pretty much kept to herself except for her friendship with Dianne. Jenny preferred animals to people—animals

loved her unconditionally. Jenny never had many friends.

Jenny and her mother were very close and lived together until her mother's death. Maybe Rebecca resented that and envied Jenny and that was why she was so cruel and mean-spirited. Jenny remembered one time when Rebecca and Reagan, her daughter, just showed up one afternoon, maybe to borrow money. Jenny had been looking through her mother's old photos, searching for pictures of herself to make into a through-the-years photo album. When she asked Rebecca if she had any of them together, Reagan piped up and said her mom threw out all the pictures she had of her childhood.

Rebecca and Reagan stuck together despite their age difference. Rebecca was pregnant at seventeen with Reagan, the first of four children and then went on to marry Mark and have three more children. Rebecca dictated who Reagan could and could not be friends with. After Reagan got an apartment of her own, Rebecca didn't pay her rent several times and got evicted from her public housing apartment. She'd given all of her money to the lottery. Reagan was forced to take in Rebecca. Maybe it was all a ruse to move in with her daughter and control her. Rebecca's friends became Reagan's friends. Rebecca constantly wanted to know what Reagan was doing when she was out of sight. Rebecca would call Reagan a good ten times a day from work just to see what she was doing. Reagan worked from home and hardly got a moment's peace.

Jenny had life insurance policies and had made arrangements for herself and her cats for when she died. She also had some wonderful collections in her house that she had collected over the years. Jenny wanted to ensure things would be done her way and she trusted her cousin to see to that.

The snowflakes were getting bigger now--big as the ones you can catch on your tongue and they came tumbling down, landing on the windowsill and coating the ground outside, emphasizing the warmth and coziness of Jenny's apartment. Jenny felt fulfilled. In the kitchen, Jenny decided that she would put everything into a roasting pan and roast the chicken with the potatoes, carrots, and onions.

There was a sharp, hard knock on the door. Jenny wondered who would be knocking at her door since she never had company. Who could it be, knocking on her door on this Saturday afternoon on a day when people are usually out running errands after working all week? Jenny didn't quite make it to the door fast enough. The insistent knock started up again.

"Who is it?" Jenny called out.

"It's us, open the door," a demanding voice called back.

Oh, no! Jenny thought, *It's them!* The control freaks as Jenny referred to them. Jenny opened the door and found her two nemeses, Rebecca and Reagan. How she wished it were anyone else at the door. They pushed their way in.

"What's that smell?" said Reagan.

"It stinks in here," echoed Rebecca.

They were carrying a Christmas patterned bag and put it on the table. Jenny hadn't seen or heard from them in over a year, since her mother's funeral. Both were fat, with short bleached hair. Reagan's hair was so closely cropped that she looked like a man, which was fine if this is the look she was going for, and Rebecca's was bushy and resembled a Dutch boy. What was it this time? What was Jenny in for? Rebecca and Reagan both lit cigarettes without asking.

"Get me an ashtray," demanded Rebecca.

Jenny just happened to have an old one on hand that she took down from the shelf in the pantry. Jenny hadn't smoked in seven years, but kept the ashtray because it was antique.

"We bought you some gifts. Open them up," said Reagan sharply.

"How have you two been?" asked Jenny.

"Fine, just open up the fuckin' gifts. We have to go food shopping for our Christmas Eve party."

What about inviting me? Jenny thought to herself. Jenny started to gingerly open the gifts. Rebecca and Reagan kept sighing because she was taking too long.

"Come on, hurry up, we haven't got all day," Rebecca said.

Why did they even bother to come over--and with gifts? Jenny remembered one time when all three of them went to the cemeteries a few years earlier. That's the one thing they had in common that they enjoyed doing. Jenny always got a peaceful feeling when she went to the cemeteries.

Jenny opened up one cheap, crappy gift after another and thanked them very much. She didn't mean to be ungrateful. The first gift she opened was a small resin dog statue. The next gift was a clear acrylic teddy bear holding a birthstone that wasn't even Jenny's. They gave her yellow potholders even though Jenny's kitchen had been red for as long as she could remember, and a bottle of imitation designer perfume. Jenny wondered

why they even bothered. Something was up.

The snow was still falling outside and the delicious smell of the roasting chicken and vegetables was filling the air. The cats decided that it was time to investigate and jumped up on the table and started sniffing around the gifts, but the cigarette smoke burned their eyes and they jumped back down.

"Why didn't you kick them off the table?" scolded Rebecca.

Reagan said, "That's disgusting, fucking cats," shaking her head.

"I was wondering," said Rebecca. Here it comes. This was always Rebecca's opening line when she wanted something. She thought she was cute and funny. She was fifty-two years old!

"What is it?" Jenny said.

"Well, you know that Ray is dying of cancer and you have that double grave plot. Well, I think you should let Ray be buried in it," Rebecca said with meaning.

Jenny replied, "I had to buy a double plot. That's the way they came, and I really don't want anyone being buried with me."

"You're an asshole, why do you have to be like that?" Reagan said.

"Excuse me, but since when am I Ray's keeper, he's your boyfriend," Jenny said to Rebecca.

"Well, what do you care anyway, nobody's going to your funeral so it won't even matter." This hurt to the core and Jenny was at a loss for words.

"That's not a very nice thing to say, how do you know anyone will go to your funeral?" Jenny managed to reply.

"Because I have lots of friends, unlike you."

"Yeah, fake friends," Jenny said.

Jenny certainly wasn't going to tell them about her lottery winnings. They'd hound her for money and try to bleed her dry. They refused tea.

"Well, we're leaving then, bye," Rebecca said abruptly.

"Yeah, we got to go shopping for our big party," said Reagan.

Phony show-offs, Jenny thought. Jenny said goodbye and walked them out. She almost started to break down and cry, but she was bound and determined not to let them get to her. They had hurt her too many times over and over in the past.

She found a cardboard box, put all of the gifts inside it and made a sign that said, "Free!" Jenny carried the box out back to the dumpster where she laid it down with the sign attached. She felt a weight lift from her as she slowly walked back up the stairs.

Jenny sat in her chair, smelled the roasting chicken, and the cats joined her with their warm purrs. Let it snow. She fell asleep briefly, and woke reluctantly to the buzzer on the oven. She turned on the news as she cut up the chicken . As an aside the newscaster said that there had been a horrific car crash. *Two women died in a crash on the highway this hour. They were driving a red, Kia Sophia.*

Jenny secretly hoped that it was Rebecca and Reagan and that they would now finally be out of her life. No more torment and aggravation. No more being left out of family gatherings like some total stranger.

"What a terrible thought," Jenny said aloud. "Even if I do despise them I shouldn't wish that on them."

When Jenny finished her dinner, she cleaned up the kitchen and poured herself a glass of champagne. The sun started going down and snow was still falling while Jenny and her two cats were safe and sound inside. Jenny glanced out the back window. A middle-aged man and woman were walking arm in arm, carrying her cardboard box between them.

Jenny went back to her chair. She pulled the soft throw around her. She closed her eyes and drifted off again.

Technology

I don't think this is
Working out for me
Because you are using
Too much technology.
And I want to get hands on
Your body and soul
Using electronics is cold.
Cell phones, keyboards, iPads, iPods
Turn all of my electronics off
In person I should be
Watching you watching me
Intimacy will never be replaced
By the lure of technology.
Sure those robots from Japan
Are starting to look outstandingly
Like woman in the flesh
But again I surely bet
They aren't as good at sex
As the real girls who can blush
Because true emotions are a must.

Varenn Larose

Road Less Travelled

The Struggle for Discovery and Self Acceptance

Free will is the right of every individual. But sometimes, it is essential to ask—who holds the power in our lives? For some, it takes many hardships and trials to discover who we are, and not who we're supposed to conform to.

Raised in a Jehovah's Witness household twenty five year-old Angela Quick grew up under rigid discipline.

"We weren't supposed to join competitive sports in school, or to pledge allegiance to the flag," she said.

Neither were they allowed to celebrate birthdays and holidays. Because of this, Angela remembers the teachers being really nice to her, allowing her to draw pictures of leaves while the other students decorated pumpkins or Christmas trees.

Then during a regular physical at age 10, Angela was diagnosed with severe scoliosis, and underwent 3 major surgeries in 5 years. She was ordered to wear a brace that went from her neck to her lower spine for 23 hours a day up until her late teens, and wore loose fitting clothes to hide the bulkiness. She began to hate herself.

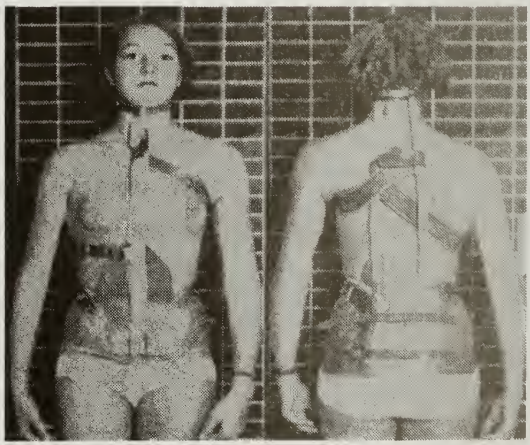
"All the other girls got to wear tank tops and shorts, and I had to wear baggy clothes to hide the fact that my ribcage was at an 87 degree angle," Angela recalled. "My brother used to call me 'turtle shell'."

As she went through puberty, her parents separated (but remained together in the house) and her brother dropped out of high school, causing her to sink into a deep depression. "At that point, I just wanted to rebel," she said. So she did--hanging out with the "wrong crowd," Angela met a boy her parents didn't approve of, and they began to do drugs together. Her new friends dropped out of school so she followed suit.

When she was sixteen her parent kicked her out of their house.

Angela decided to move to New York, hoping life would be easier there. After breaking up with her high school boyfriend, she hooked up with another man and they lived together for several months. As the relationship progressed, however, they argued more, until he kicked her out of the apartment.

"I was so hurt, and I didn't know where to go," Angela said.



Finally, she called a friend in Tennessee, who welcomed her with open arms. Angela packed up her car with her belongings ("I still don't know why I brought my TV with me," she said, laughing) and drove for six-

teen and a half hours. She made it to Tennessee, and then the car broke down.

Her friend noticed the frequent bouts of sadness and melancholy Angela suffered, so she gave her what Angela deems to be "the worst advice ever"—that she needed "to get laid."

So they went to a club. Angela met a guy. They exchanged numbers, and a month later they began to date. And that's when Angela lost her virginity, at nineteen.

She remembers asking the guy if he used protection. He lied. Angela missed a period, and discovered she was pregnant. At that point she was working odd jobs, ranging from waitress to custodian. She began to take care of herself, and vowed she would not abort the child.

One day while working, Angela felt hot and sweaty. She became dizzy. Blood began to trickle down her legs. She was five months into her pregnancy.

"My manager knew I was pregnant, and she advised me to go to the hospital," Angela said.

She called her mom, who also knew about her pregnancy, and she advised Angela to do the same. She never told her father. Upon arriving at the hospital, a nurse told her to pee into a cup. In a bathroom stall, as she began to pee, she heard an unfamiliar sound. She looked down and saw her fetus in the toilet bowl.

"I just started screaming," she says. "I was screaming and screaming. I kind of wanted someone to check up on me, but no one did."

She ran back to the nurse and showed her the cup. When the nurse reached for it, Angela slapped her hand away, and continued sobbing and screaming until she was put into a wheelchair and rolled away.

Throughout her ordeal, Angela recalls only one act of kindness from the nurses there—one agreed to shave her armpits so that she can look presentable for a visiting friend, even though it was against the rules.

After being released from the hospital, Angela moved back to New York and divided her time between there and Boston. She tried to re-orient herself by getting another job, paying rent, all the while dreaming of what she wanted to do most of all—a college degree.

"All I wanted was to go to school, and I couldn't afford that and rent in Brooklyn," she said.

After finally settling down in Boston and spending five semesters at Roxbury Community College, Angela transferred to UMass Boston in 2011. Angela now lives with boyfriend Bryan Relay, who she's been seeing since 2010. She's made plans to move back into her parent's house, which will be her first time there in 8 years.

"I don't want to be pressured into doing anything with him. He doesn't wanna get married, and he doesn't appreciate my beliefs or religious background."

Bryan is Buddhist. He calls her experiences, and her childhood brainwash. But the experiences she had were tangible, she believes. And as a future nurse, she wants to be a positive example for people still going through the realities she experienced.

"They need to know there's hope in this jaded world," she says. "I want to show kindness to people who have to grow through what I did."

"Me and my daughter will look in magazines, to see how the churches look or whatever. And then we start playing: this one goes good; that one goes better. It starts turning into something. Saint Petersburg Church is very big, so it's going to be a big project, but I don't have all of the materials. So for now it's on standby.

"Whatever I do, everything is recycled. Items that I use at home or we find it in the trash. I drink a lot of tea, and save the envelopes. I find bags for chips are very useful. So I start saving, saving, saving, and then me and my daughter take them out and say, 'What can we do?'

Art of Trash

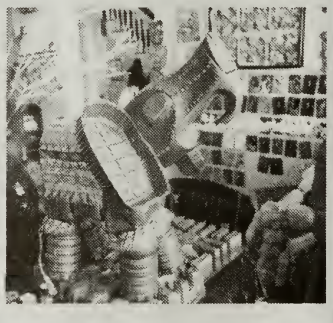
Consuelo Perez Finds Beauty in Used Bottles

"So at UMass, I go and look for the bottles, and we play together. I say, 'What can this be?' And my daughter says, 'This looks like a dog. No, it looks like a sheep." You know so we start, depending on the form, looking for the best materials.

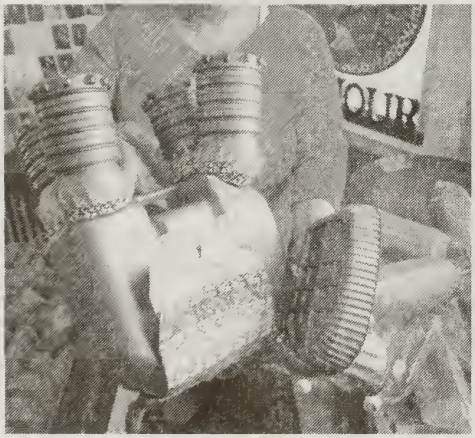
"In everything we try to preserve the shapes of the materials, and that way people can know what we used. Use your imagination for the colors, and wonderful things can come.

"The paints are made by my daughter. She splashes, and I fill them out. When we're making something we'll say, 'We need the ears." And we start searching for something that could look like the ears, and we look at magazines to see what they look like, and find something in that shape."

- Consuelo J. Perez



"For example, with this one, it started with a bottle of water."



"I call this one The Incredible Juice, like the Incredible Hulk, because it's all made of juice bottles. It's very juicy. We dress him with hats, and make him a fireman, or a cowboy. Today he is Irish."

"This one is made with the cards that they give you at different stores. This, for example, is Target. This is Chipotle. I wanted to do a mosaic, but to do a mosaic is very expensive, so this is what we come up with, my daughter and I."

"This one we made for Halloween, to put outside. We went crazy with that. We were just coming back from Singapore, and I was crazy about the dragons. I was like, I want to have a dragon in my house, so how can I do it? And we just started collecting the materials. Like my daughter was asking at the school if they could give her the honey bottles, because they used the honey. And then she was drinking yogurt, these small bottles of yogurt. Then we were trying to figure out how to do the claws, and I found the perfect tops of the bottles from this water. I don't know how I found it. I think God sent it to me.

"It didn't take us too long to make because we were out searching for bottles every week. We asked people if they drank certain things. We try to preserve the shape of these bottles so it resembles what it is. It's easy to cut, and make, but more difficult to preserve the shapes so that way you can see – that's a bottle."

Fandango

Three men scurry through a dank hallway. Light shines through the left and right sides of the frame. I see one green eye peeking out of the black face of one of the men. The painting flies away from my eyes. I can see it float through a vast blackness, a dark space that fills the world around me.

That image comes into my mind when I think early in the morning, when I think. I sit in a white kitchen filled with plastic furniture. I can see myself thinking about the dark picture and slowly growing older, more catlike, a pile of ash with an orange face.

Someone enters on this particular five am in the kitchen while I drink coffee. It is a black man, similar to the ones I saw on the image floating through my mind. He enters my kitchen and I struggle to ask him a question. Who is he? Why is he in my kitchen, in my white home?

He turns to me suddenly, stares me in the eyes and questions me, "Hello, ma'am. Where did you find that unusual hair color?"

"It is my natural color," I answer.

"But how, my dear," he says as he removes his hat. "How do you expect your natural hair color can be orange?"

I do not know what my hair color matters to why he is in my house. I miss having men around me, telling me what to do when faced with black men in green hats.

All of a sudden, the black man takes my hands and spins me across the room. I lean over onto the back of a chair and bounce back up, leaping into his arms as he whisks me out the window and carries me through a meadow of daisies.

We run through the meadow, my pink dress flowing through his hands of dark greasepaint. He smiles at me, his white teeth gleaming, as if the sun is reflecting its rays through his smile into my glistening, orange eyes.

I gaze into his eyes, seeing an image appear on them, a moving picture of Crayola rockets booming off into space.

There is only blackness now, an empty void where his eyes used to be. He glares at me again as we move to a cavern. He still carries me in his arms, gazing into my eyes as we move down a flight of ruddy, earthen steps. We sway down, further into the heat of the cave, each step of his growing wider as the orange staircase expands and fills the room.

We'll dance all day and night, with the finest gowns I can afford.

We reach the bottom of the staircase and jump onto a revolving, spiraling floor filled with streams of orange and yellow paint. He takes me and hugs my body against his, my legs swiveling around his back.

He whispers into my ear, "What are you doing here, woman?"

He pulls his head away from mine and opens his mouth, revealing two rows of venomous green teeth oozing with pus.

He lifts me up and begins to dance with me again, turning and twisting me around the floor of dripping paint, the paint drenching my feet as they jilt and turn to the beat of the dance. I cry now, his hips against mine, his cheerful grin side-by-side with my cheek.

"Marry me," he says, "and I'll make you a fine mother. You'll have so many babies. We will move to Mexico, to the heart of womanhood. We'll dance all day and night, with the finest gowns I can afford. Oh, lady, promise me your soul and I'll grant you all the dreams of my sisters, all the exuberance little Mexican girls spend their days yearning for. You'll have such a life, Madame, I bid you come with me."

I stop dancing now. It is me alone, now. He is gone. I am left in a spotlight on a stage, with the stage's black emptiness surrounding me. I start

to sing, to sing of all my desires and ambitions, my hopes and losses, my loves and my enemies. I sing so much no one can hear.

The spotlight moves away from me and onto the black man in the upstage-right corner. He carries a rose in his mouth and leans his torso over to the side of his legs as he snaps his fingers and sashays across the stage. At once, he is holding me again, holding me in that same position with his gleaming eyes, gazing at me and waiting for my response to his queries.

"I... I... I'll do it," I say.

He utters a laugh, resonating deep noise bouncing out of his mouth like beads on a string.

"You thought I was serious? You are quite a woman. I'm not going to marry you." And he gleams at me. His eyes turn bright red. "I'm going to murder you."

The black man takes my neck and opens it, and tears a gaping hole in my skin with his knuckles. A single gush of blood falls out of my head in a plopping clump and splatters on the floor. The blood trickles down over the rotating floor, dripping off the sides of the dance hall. The floor levitates. Blood pours over the sides, gushing and covering the space outside the floor. A fountain of red water flows from the orange floor.

The walls have vanished into blackness. I see a silvery helicopter gliding across the sky above us, the man holding me down, my blood covering the entire floor. I stare into the sky as the shape of the silvery helicopter blends into the rest of my view. It all becomes white, white as nothing, and before long I see nothing but whiteness.

Melissa Bass

I Speak to Stars

I speak to stars,
They ne'er reply
But pout their lips
And bat their eyes.
They take my hands
And burn my palms
Then turn to dust
Inside my arms.

Six Weeks in Rwanda

Abigail Poirier

Last summer I traveled to Rwanda for six weeks to volunteer in a hospital, and learn about an entirely different way of life. In my time there, I spent most of my time in the hospital, lived with two African families and two missionary families, visited Lake Kivu (one of the great lakes), and met some incredible individuals. I had a terrible digital camera, with minimal battery life, and unpredictable glitches, which limited my picture taking abilities. However, I managed to bring home some images that I felt were inadequate at the time, but now in retrospect, I realize these photographs display more than I can begin to articulate about my experiences in Africa.

By Lake Kivu, I was sitting on a blanket with another American, and the children featured sat watching us for the hour we were there. How can they be so mesmerized by something as simple as skin? Many have asked this question, in all different contexts, but here it is a matter of simple curiosity.

When viewing this photo you must know that Rwanda is known as "The Land of a Thousand Hills," and these are the hills that this man must face every day, just to make a meager salary of about two American dollars a day. Watching him and many other cyclists push the weight of their goods up hill after hill made me question my own determination and ability to persevere.

A woman tolerantly smiles at me with bundles on her head, and her infant strapped to her back. She carried that load five-plus miles in 100 degree heat, on her trek to the daily market. I don't know how she managed the smile, strained as it may appear.

Rwandan school children are shown swarmed around the door to the vehicle to look at me. There is an intense fascination, and love for white skinned people in East Africa, as they are regarded to have much wealth. It is painfully ironic that I was shown so much generosity, while westerners like myself exploit the natural resources of this land and hard work of its people.

Daniel Mulcahy

On a Rooftop

On a rooftop
Memories float like pollen through the air,
An outreached hand catches several
Examining them, he sees the images of the past
Reflections in a hall of mirrors

He sees
A clear day, the smell of sulfur lays heavy in the air
The color blue, surreal
A cool breeze makes the hair stand in attention like a million soldiers
Then the heat of the water relaxes with the intensity of the sun

Visions
The music spins and twirls, making the bodies sway
Neon lights, a blur
The entirety of existence seems to be here, in that moment
A kiss, silence – but the music plays still

The sights
Cracks in the walls, the echoing of some disturbance long past
The darkness, oppressive
The smell of piss and burnt onions
A map of Ireland and JFK hang amongst the cob webs

A Glimpse
Rain falls on the leaves and drips upon us
Grey, soothing
Holding hands, wet and shivering – the smell of tobacco
Beer, laughter of friends, a fire are all failed attempts to keep warm

Pictures
The world flashes through the glass, rushing past - almost unstoppable
Green and Brown, hard
Words fill every recess, smiles on the faces, these stories always told
The car slips into the night, going forward, towards a grand adventure

On a rooftop
Memories float like pollen through the air,
An outreached hand catches several
And chooses to release them

Gleb Dozorets

The Bathroom Window

One day in autumn, Greg had discovered that there was a strange man looking into his apartment through the bathroom window. What surprised Greg even more than the stranger was the fact that he had never had a window in his bathroom before. It seemed to him that he had no windows in his apartment at all. The man in the window somehow seemed familiar to Greg though. Perhaps a long lost brother he thought.

This man had a fetish for mimicking Greg. He would mockingly pretend to shave whenever Greg would. He also liked to fashion himself in a spitting image of Greg. This drove Greg into a furious fever, and he one day yelled at the window, "Why do you mock me so?" The only response was more mimicry. This only enraged Greg further. He felt he had had enough of this stranger's game, and that he would smash his face in the next time he saw him outside the bathroom window.

So one morning, Greg went into his bathroom prepared to combat his adversary. To his amazement the only thing he saw outside was the bathroom walls. Greg did not understand. He wanted to see the stranger, but the man would not show himself. Greg shouted at the closed window, "Where did you go? Where are you hiding?" He then opened the window, leaned a tad too far, and fell. Then the man showed himself once more, only this time it was Greg himself.

Loveless

She was the moon and he was no one. Her color was blue and his black. They met on a few occasions, usually at a party or some other social gathering, but they knew nothing of each other. He didn't know she was frail. She didn't know he was small. They never talked, except for the cordial greetings of their caste. But they shared something, some fundamental part of the beyond, some piece of the eternal mystery.

It started that orange autumn night. We were all there, in some way, especially the cup. He was in a stupor and she was bliss. It was the only time they shared an understanding, though neither of them knew it. The moment was perpetually brief. Fate had overlooked them. The air was cold but they were warm.

No one knew she was the moon. She did not. She only knew herself as the reflection in her mirror. She was not vain, she was physical. So she saw him physically while he observed himself in abstractions. He saw her in metaphors. They had no link except for that drunken moment. But it was there. No one knew it.

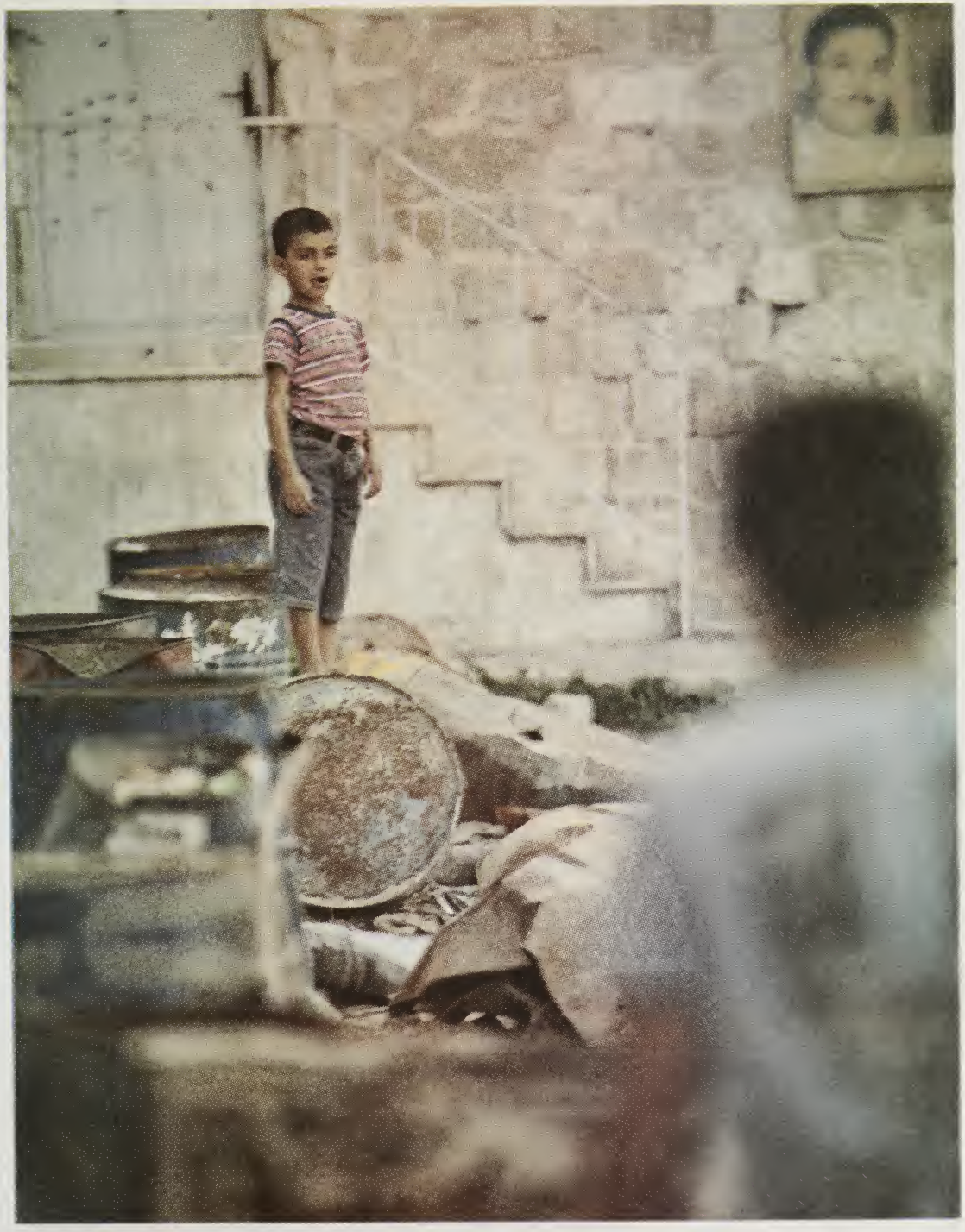
Eventually he grew sick and drew close to death; not physically. She was happy in her ignorance and by their understanding so was he. No one died.

Balata Refugee Camp

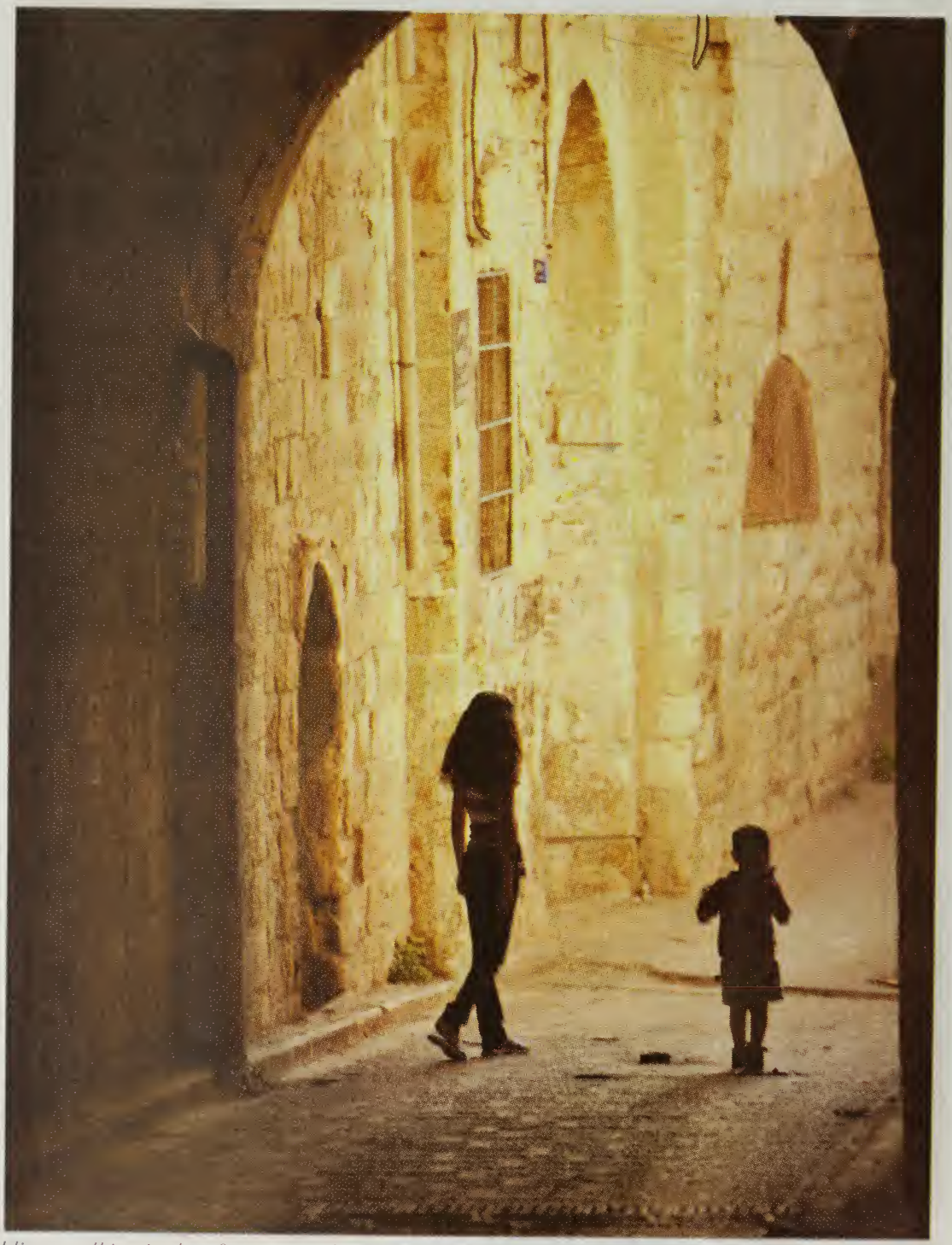
Teresa Yah

I traveled to Palestine as a member of an arts delegation organized by the Fellowship of Reconciliation and Barefoot Artists, Inc.

This is a selection from a series of documentary photographs I took in the Balata Refugee camp on the outskirts of Nablus, Palestine in September 2011. This was one of two trips that inspired me to return to school last fall to finish my degree at UMass Boston with the hope of making a greater difference in the world in the future. Traveling to Palestine in September 2011, I was privileged to not only witness some of the struggles of daily life in the Balata Refugee camp, but also a series of passionate and hope-filled demonstrations leading up to Palestine's Sept 26, 2011 bid for UN membership. I was also struck by how much love, hospitality, and sense of community prevailed within the camp, despite the extreme overcrowding, lack of resources, and prevalence of an atmosphere of oppression and frustration that also existed.



A young boy standing on abandoned cans at the outskirts of a site of a candy factory that was destroyed by the Israeli military during the second Intifada in Nablus.



Siblings walking in the afternoon in the old city of Nablus.

An young Palestinian man comforting his baby brother.

lg.
LAWRENCE
GILLETTE
2011

Lawrence Gillette

"Aghabar's"

On the edge of a great desert
A village glimmers like a mirage
And among its ancient architecture
Lies a bizarre bazaar

It is an eclectic market
With vendors from afar
Selling such goods as unicorn kabob
Erotic scrolls, and boasting a sheik opium bar

But hidden on a sideway
Is a gem of a place
On a street with no name
Is a merchant of peculiar taste

Here, the howler monkeys don't even hang around
On the door is a hand painted sign
Welcome To Aghabar's…
Best Farts In Town!

And there was Aghabar
A portly man with a fu-man-chu
Tattered robes
And an affinity for poo

He ushered me along
Walls filled with jars
Some clear, some tinted
He wafted as we walked
They were vintage perfumes
The most rare on the planet.
No preservatives he assured
…strictly organic.

He cracked a jar lid
Releasing a squeaker
There were also Silent But Deadlies
That ol' pungent creeper

A section of breakwinds
From a mythical nature
Contained Ogre's back odors
And the shart of a Satyr

An array of far-reaching flatulence
From the ends of the Earth
Chinese firecracker farts, Dutch ovens,
And French poofs of noble birth

A slender jar
Held a princess's fluff
And an Eskimo's gas
Was cold to the touch

A few jars contained water
A bubble bobbed to and fro
Captured from a squid or a seahorse's
Belch down below

Some jars were just odd
And downright creepy
Like Siamese farts
From connected cheeks was just freaky
There were historical farts
Like Ivan the Terrible's
And I was surprised to find out
A hint of lavender made it quite impeccable

A ventriloquist rip
Had me somewhat confused
When you opened the lid
It came from the other side of the room

But Aghabar saved
The most heinous for last
Thundercrack in a bottle
Born of Hades' ass
A mixture of cabbage
And volcanic ash
Of sun warmed garbage
A sulfur methane sourmash

He raised it to my nose
And I let out a gasp
The scent hit my intestines
Like a thousand scratching cats
The room began to melt
I repeatedly gagged
From somewhere faraway
I heard Aghabar laugh

He said, "Some things are an acquired taste
And not for the sensitive or weak
But please come again
We're having a sale next week"

Aaron Griffin

Relapse

Your whiskey lips left me hungover
and my whiskey dick left you feeling sober.
Awkward sex with no handholding
sweat drips from our backs
and pools in sheets unfolding
Bodies crash together like tides off shore
It's all I want and nothing more
Or nothing less then a settled score
Revenge is a dish best served cold
But I'm hot for you and feeling sore
legs in the air seem to reach for help
but only screams of my name come from your mouth
Nails tear into innocent skin
Blood leaks down from that broken sin
I was out of the woods
Now I'm right back in.
Right back in you were this all begins
It's over now and I come up for air
In love and war even this is fair
Regrets hang in the air unsaid
Stale breath resonates about this bed
Blacking out and bending truths
drunken dreams of fucking you
drunken words long overdue
I try to say your name
but yours isn't what comes out
I try to take it back but it's over now
I've made my bed now I'll sleep in it
but your gin and tonic kisses don't mean shit.

Traces of Humanity

Alexis Sherman

Women in Persepolis (Iran)

Balconies in Cairo (Egypt)

Cozumel Sunrise (Mexico)

Traditional Abiyaneh Dresses (Iran)

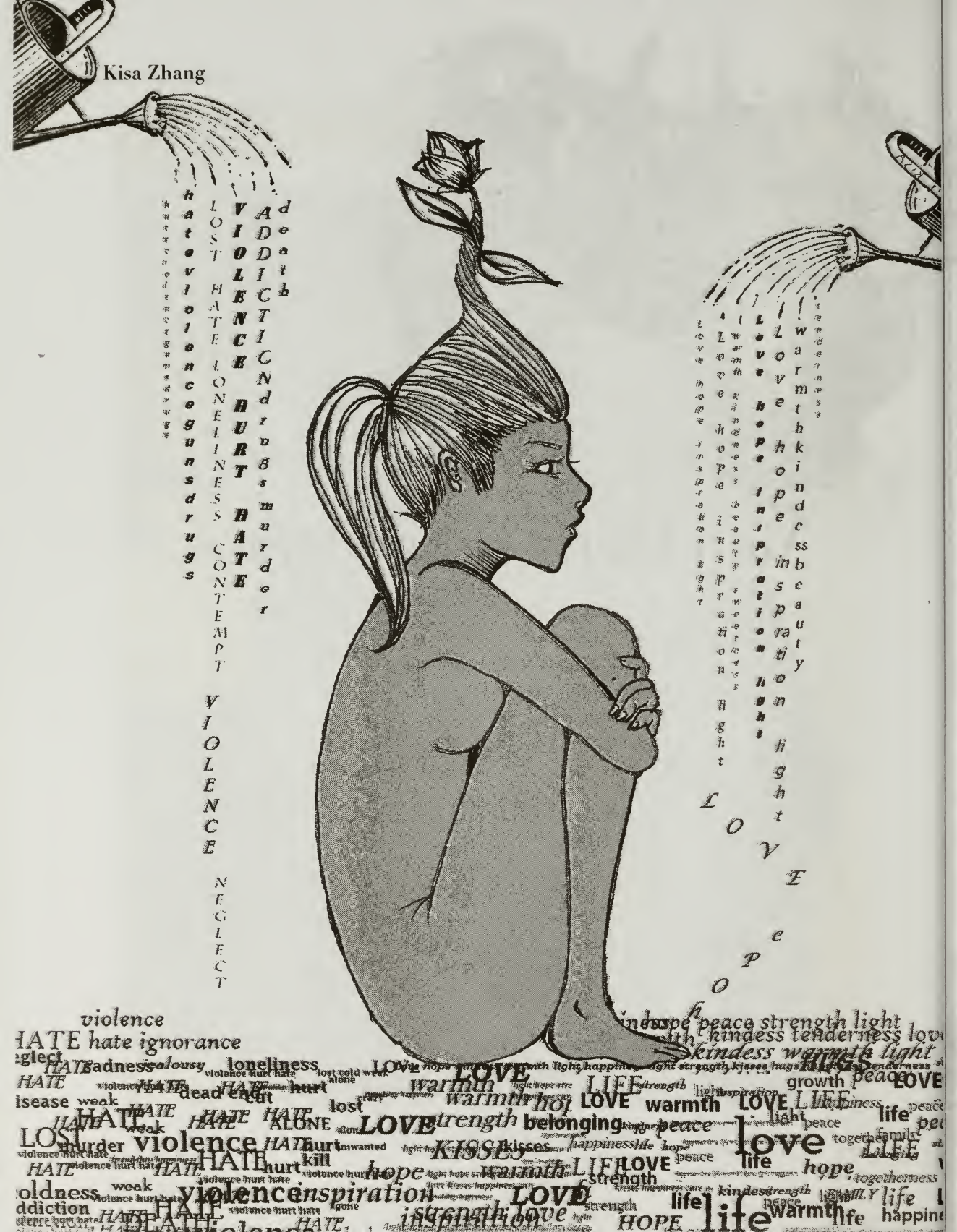
Outside the Vatican (Italy)

Fatima Teixeira

Man Done Come Home

This man was not my daddy. He didn't look anything like I remembered. He had long, wavy brown hair that now hid the tattoo of the Star of David behind his left ear. He no longer had the dark bruises above his protruding collar bone where his silver chain used to hang—the one that used to pinch at his skin where one of the ringlets had broken the day it got caught in a branch while he was building my tree house. This man was even a bit heavier in muscle than my daddy used to be, and he stood taller and straighter. Patrolling around in the hot Kabul sun will do that to you, he explained. It scared me to look into his eyes. All the warmness and humor was drained from this man's eyes, unlike my daddy's, whose sparkling green eyes were contagious enough to put a smile on anyone's face. No, this man was not my daddy. Walking about the yard after we'd driven home from the airport, with those huge and ugly, puke-green boots that I imagined would crush me whenever he took a step towards me. He offered to drive us home in momma's old 1977 aquamarine Volkswagen. He'd stared at me the entire ride, telling momma that I seemed different. I hadn't changed since he left; I was only distant now. Distant from this new man and longing for my daddy.

Kisa Zhang


hateviolencegunsdrugs
LOST HATE LONELINESS CONTEMPT
VIOLENCE HURT HATE
ADDICTIONdrugsmurder
death
VIOLENCE NEGLECT
Love hope inspiration light
warmthkindcssbeauty
LOVE

Kim Soun Ty

The Schizophrenic

Against the dark background of this contemporary civilization of well-being, even the arts tend to mingle, to lose their identity. -Eugenio Montale

The summer rain swallowed her whole as her heart pounded to the rhythm of the tears the sky cried. Her bright yellow wedges became a dirty mustard as she slithered through the night, trying not to be seen. A maroon sweatshirt was pulled over her pink summer dress—or something of the likes.

Her mascara ran down her cheeks along with the hair spray that was used to keep her brown hair tidy. Her bright pink lip gloss, tint of blush, and foundation were no exception either. Anything and everything ran off her, away from her.

Like the laughing sun, she was bright during the day—smiling like there was no tomorrow, beautiful only to please. But when midnight hit, like every Cinderella out there, the glass shoe fell off and the carriage became a pumpkin once again. The only difference that belonged to the real life Cinderella was that there was no prince in shining armor to make life all better.

She slicked back the hair that was sticking to her face. She faked an identity when the sun was out. Bright and yellow. It was so different from her real moon's dark and grays.

The layers of makeup continued to shed.

There was no stopping it.

But she didn't mind; summer rainfalls were her favorite anyways. The darker the night, the heavier the rain, the more she loved life. Sometimes, when the day's shine was too much, she lost a bit of herself. She tended to forget who she was in the identity she concocted. A summer day is long and hot, wiping out a person easily but the night is cool, bringing back some sense—revealing who you truly are.

Her heels came to an abrupt halt as she stopped in place.

With the sleeve of her sweatshirt, she continuously wiped the makeup off her face, the rain making a perfect remover. Finally satisfied, she looked down at her feet and suddenly kicked the now mustard wedges off. She continued to walk barefoot as the wedges sat on the side of the curb.

She got further and further away from it.

What started off as a slight jog turned into a full out sprint, her bare feet dashing towards her unknown destination. She didn't care. Her legs pumped faster.

The rain poured down her bare face. Life was great.

Joannie L. Ortiz

Kissing Earth

Splotches of White dotted them;
random and stubborn mushrooms
        seen from the air
avoiding the tiniest of crevices
and cracks and still intact
Then soft, pink and shining slightly - misformed
        not far from some
tipped with a gray off white
        and at their base – crag and rock; a hill before
then three more
they changed over their bends
        some with some with mounds, others with scratches
each on traveled themselves
Then a valley
        connecting them all
        with holes and trenches
Scarred,
Never quite refilled right
The ground had not regained its original color
even as the blue rivers and tiny creeks passed through and under
giving the dark small, soft blades of grass life beneath
Splitting and branching – reaching all around
no inch of land was without life
yet it was barren and discolored
the aesthetically ugly
        a land unfair

        And still
                gently kneeling-
                and truly appreciating
making them seem beautiful again
    by kissing my hands...

Alexa Fisher

Spicy

My mother was one morphine drip away from naming my sister and I Cilantro and Basil. Spices are organized alphabetically in our cabinet. A woman did this in a movie once; she aligned and worshiped her spices. The whole theater chuckled and my mother laughed and asked if she was that neurotic too. Stone gargoyles line our foyer. Garlic necklaces choke the figurines and sometimes I can see their concrete eyes tear up from the root. Me, on the other hand, I pick up the landline just to hear the dial tone. I buy teeth stuck in Lucite on EBay and work at an adult video store. My mother says my life lacks guidance.

"I understand that your mom asked you to come see me today."

"Yes I suppose I am the case to be worked on."

"You are not a case, nor do you need 'working'..."

He put his two fingers up in quotation markers.

"But what you may find, here, is something inside yourself. Another person trying to escape out of you. A person who wants to be productive and successful in life. And I can assure you, that your mother just wants to help you. So do I."

"Okay."

"Okay! Great. Why don't you start by telling me what you like to do, your hobbies, passions, etc."

He sat with his arms cropped adjacently with the arms of his leather chair and legs crossed in the classic "T" fashion. His eyebrows were raised and his argyle socks

matched his tie. *What a cookie cutter.*

"I like Pina Coladas, and getting caught in the rain. I like peeing the ocean, and I like sipping—

"Rosemary, please try and be serious about this. Remember I am only trying to help. Lets start with your job, please tell me a little bit about that..."

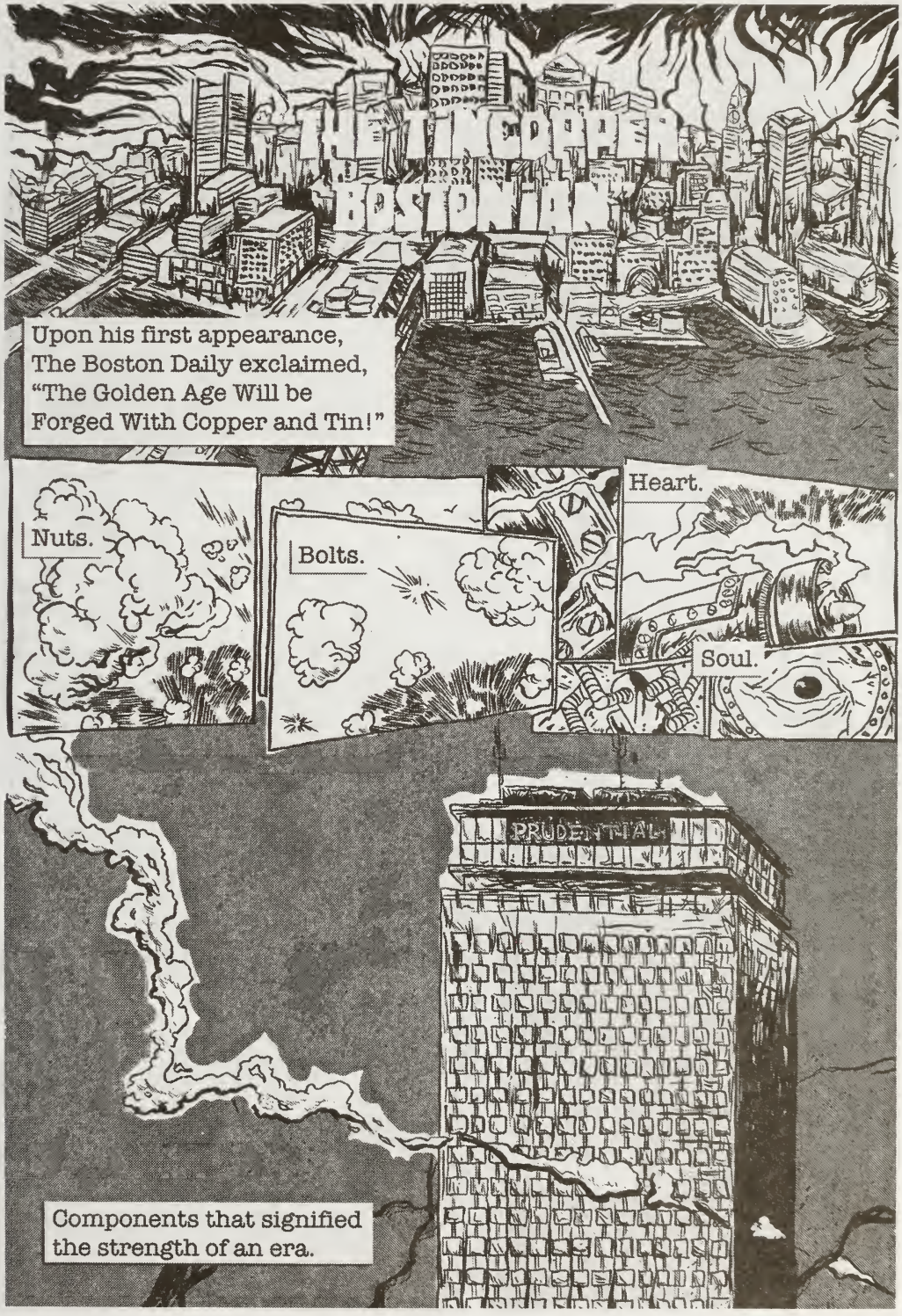
He has no idea what he's in for.

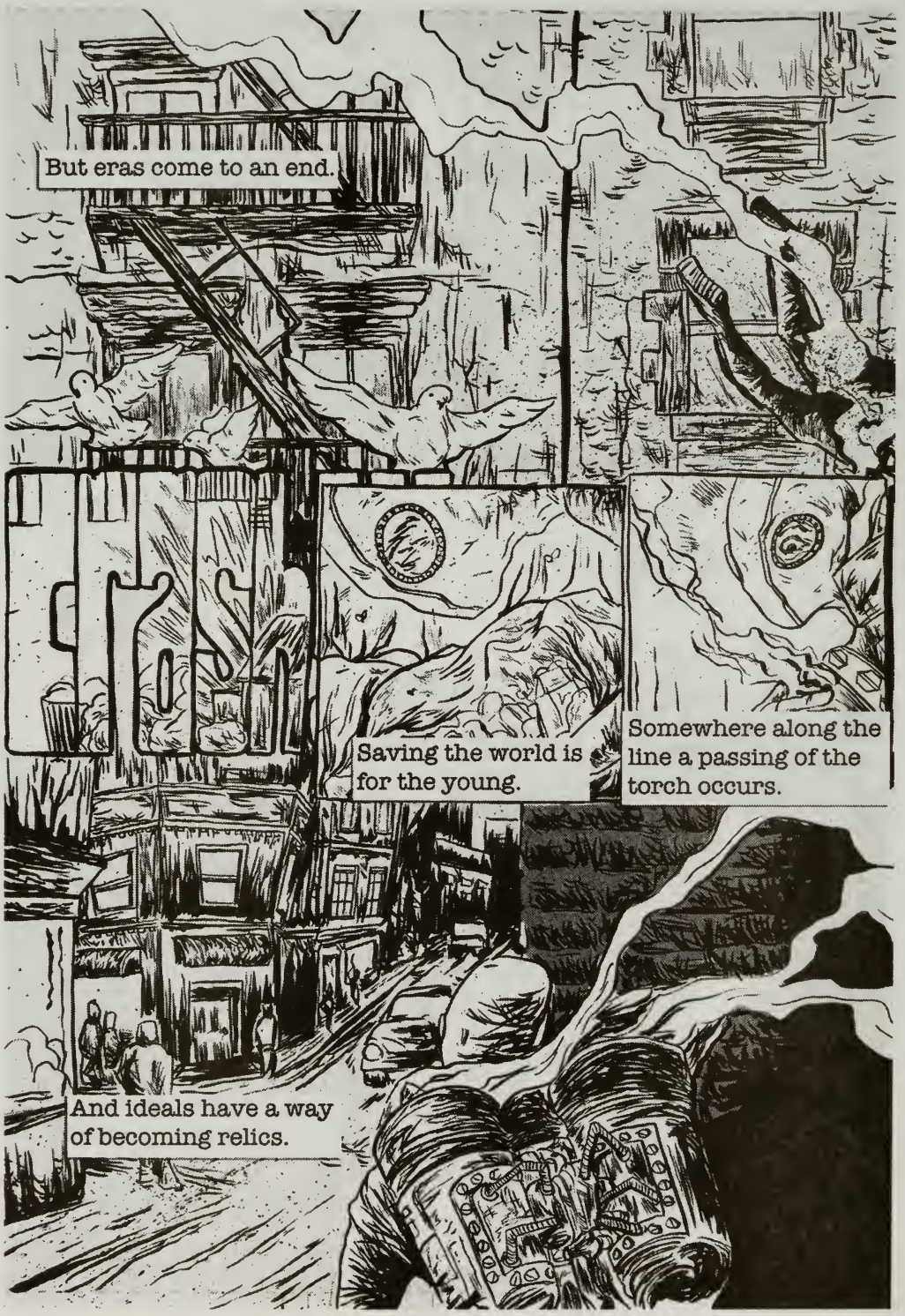
"I guess one of my hobbies would be, that I like to see what kinds of people pick which kinds of porn. Some macho construction worker comes in and picks a male ass play one, a business lady gets a whipping one probably, like, the closest thing you can get to a snuff. You just never know, its unpredictable. And that's why I like my job, that and I make $12.50 an hour you cant beat that shit these days."

I can tell by the twitch in the corner of his left eye that he is trying to keep a neutral face. But it's the truth, what I've told him. Besides, I'm sure he's heard much worse.

"Thank you for sharing that, please continue."

Illusrations by Michael Kirchick


THE TIN COPPER BOSTONIAN
Upon his first appearance, The Boston Daily exclaimed, "The Golden Age Will be Forged With Copper and Tin!"
Nuts.
Bolts.
Heart.
Soul.
PRUDENTIAL
Components that signified the strength of an era.


But eras come to an end.
Saving the world is for the young.
Somewhere along the line a passing of the torch occurs.
And ideals have a way of becoming relics.

It gets harder to picture tomorrow...
...when the city around you has forgotten about yesterday.

PARK
CYBORGS STOLE MY CAMI
PAST DUE
SHINK

Today the Daily will report various sitings of an object "crashing" in the city.
It's speculated that the object was merely a "police drone".
No cause for alarm.
Nuts and bolts.
Heart and soul.
LMG

Christopher Bishop

Everything and Nothing

In the distance, the town sparkled. Its lights were visible even from so many miles away, washing the stars from the night sky. Tonight, the ice and snow made it shine all the more brightly. The lights and noises of the town meant home to its people, assured them that here was safety, here was comfort. The lights and noises brought the people in, drove out the cold, empty night. The boy had been there yesterday, sent by his father to trade their furs for winter supplies. In his pack was a new handle for the wood stove, the screws to hold it in place, and twenty boxes of dry matches, lighter than the furs but more sensitive, the matches wrapped and double-wrapped in plastic to protect them from moisture. Today, the boy was glad to have the town behind him. From here, the town was reduced to a spark on the horizon, over an endless field of white.

The boy turned away and walked back into the trees, atop the snow, his snowshoes leaving impressions of wide, criss-crossed ovals on its surface. He found his traps where he had left them. Two were empty, their jaws still poised to snap at the sky. In the third he found a rabbit, hot steam still rising from blood on the snow. He strained against the spring, setting the catch in place. He tied the rabbit's legs with a piece of string and hung it from the bundle of sticks he'd collected. He left the trap like the others, its steel teeth shining in the moonlight, and followed the smell of smoke and the flickering light.

Soon, he reached his camp and dropped the sticks. The fire had burned low; he'd been gone a while. He fed the fire wood and air, breathing it back to life. When he held his hands to the fire the feeling came back into his fingers, too sudden and too strong. Numbness became tingling, became stinging, became burning, and the boy reached even closer, rubbed his hands, checked each finger one by one to be sure they would still obey him.

When he was sure of his fingers he unlaced his boots, placing them next to the fire to dry. He held his toes out to the fire, ignoring their protests. He chose a long, straight stick and took his knife from his pack, whittling it down to a smooth, sharp skewer, then turned his knife on the rabbit. He laid the rabbit's skin by the fire to dry and then he turned the carcass, tossing its innards into the snow and spearing its body, holding it over the fire. The scent of meat joined the smoke, and the boy's mouth watered.

After he had eaten, the boy stared up at the sky for a long time. Out here, the town's lights could not wash away the stars; out here, he could feel small. He put on his boots and crawled into his lean-to. A single slanted wall of dead sticks, matted with pine needles to block the wind, it would serve for the night. He slept to the sound of the dying fire popping and snapping, and to the howling of the winter wind.

The scent of meat joined the smoke, and the boy's mouth watered.

He woke with the sun and set out to collect his traps, finding all three empty. He shouldered his pack, put the morning sun on his right, and set out for home. By midmorning he had cleared the last of the trees, surprising a white fox while it tracked a vole's movements beneath the snow. The fox stared at him a moment, decided he posed no threat, and turned its attention back to the scurrying vole. Forgetting his task, the boy watched.

The fox sniffed at the ground, put the sun at its back, and leapt. It hung there motionless in the air for what felt like a very long time, then came down all at once, jaws first. The fox's head punched through the snow, and the boy heard a muffled *squeak*. The fox came up, vole in its teeth, and looked at the boy once more. He nodded, and the fox turned and trotted off into the tundra.

By late afternoon, the cabin came into view. In another hour he was there. The boy's father greeted him, took his pack, helped him with his boots. He asked the boy what he had seen in the town, but the boy only scowled. He asked the boy what he had seen on his journey, and the boy told him.

"Nothing."

Laura Patten

Bust

One strap, two strap
Black strap, blue strap
Myriad colors, infinite patterns
Mirroring the bruising inherent
Whilst attempting to tame
The beasts.
Writhing, crying
Jiggling, sighing
Frustrations echoed throughout
The ages with each woman's
Valiant effort to restrain
The beasts.
Heaving, binding
Fashions dying
Digging our ensnaring hooks
In, one two three all
Action necessary to confine
The beasts.
Lifting, shaping
Victorious gaping
Our labors are not in vain
Proudly exposing, oftentimes posing
Augmenting the form as we unleash
The beasts.

Winston Pierre

A Clutch of Poems in French

A poem, most of time if not always, loses its essence in translation. Whether through the interpretation of its lines, or by the vocabulary, or in the alteration of its original meters, the poem loses its impact and its subtleties. Culturally as well, in metaphors and references, poems can loose their laughter, their sadness, their soul cries, and their messages in translation. A poet, in his own soulful style, chooses his meter, metaphor, rhyme, word play, irony, and personification based on his own concrete or imaginary cultural reality.

Translated poetry becomes something new, and not the same poem. The richness of French vocabulary lends an entirely different sensibility and beauty in meters, rhymes. Esthetically, and emotiontionally all poems remain the same. The power of the poet is in his or her ability to spin words in ways that make readers lament and laugh, be thoughtful or get wild. A good poem must always lead its readers to reaction.

Our spring poetry pages include several poems in French without translation to provide a venue for UMass Boston's French speaking community. This poetry section offers them freedom to genuinely express inner thoughts and sentiments through their poems. I hope this section will not only encourage the creativity of the French speaking community on campus, but also draw a few brave readers into exploring the French language and French culture.

About the Following Poems

1. *Faire Semblant, "Sham,"* is a poem, a story, metafiction. Mirma Viljean poetizes on a relationship that is withering. It is a relationship where the warmth of intimacy and the passion for each other are gone; the only thing that is left is their habits.

2. *Une Triste Réalité, "A sad truth,"* is about the socio-political reality of the writer's native land, a country where democracy is a demagogy. There is nothing secret about the corruption of this government. It is a partisan oriented system, that everyone recognizes and accepts.

3. *Dulcinée "Ladylove"* compares a ladylove's saliva as a voluptuous drink, which is made up of milk and honey. It pictures her eyes like the most resplendent stars, and her tender glance alone can fill all of the poet's desires. Ladylove is to the poet the greatest and the most genuine source of inspiration.

4. *Trop Sage, "Too Wise,"* speaks truth to the point of being excessive. It warns that a virtue can be transformed into a vice when it is excessively and badly used. The water we drink as essential for life, but a flood is disaster. The moral lesson in this poem focuses on the need to have self-control, to be able to balance one's action.

Rhode Mirma Viljean

Faire Semblant

C'est nous, dans notre petit monde à nous
Nous avons le sourire
Nous nous tenons la main
Nous nous aimons
Et pourtant, nous nous fuyons
"Vous vous ressemblez"
Ils nous rassure.
Et pourtant,
Tous nos gestes d'amour,
Tous ces mots pronouncés
Tous ces éclats de rires
C'est juste une habitude
Il y'a encore de l' incertitude
Pourquoi douter, si c'est si parfait?
Pourquoi je te résiste?
Pourquoi me fais-tu languir?
Nous vons leur dire que nous nous aimons
La vérité en est autrement
Seule nos désirs sont certains
Nos querelles, nos disputes, nos bagarres
Des évidences que nous ne pouvons que dénier
Je t'aime, tu m'aimes, nous nous aimons
Je t'assure.
Tu m'assures.
Nous nous assurons.
Et pourtant,
C'est juste une idée que nous aimons
L'idée que nous sommes fait l'un pour l'autre
L'idée que nous nous aimons

La vérité en est autrement
Nous ne faisons que semblant.

Une Triste Réalité

Je suis né dans un pays qui est politiquement en décadence.
Avant même de devenir conscient de mon existence,
J'etais déjà á même de remarquer
Dans la terre natale qu'il y a une triste réalité:

Pour subsister on peut rester sans rien faire.
Il suffit d'être simplement un partisan du maire.
Mon voisin qui a sottement atteint la 6e année fondamentale,
Il est nommée ministre d'education, une position gouvernementale.

Je suis un brilliant normalien, diplomé, et qualifié
Cependant je reste encore un pauvre ouvrier.
O! J'ai passé plus de 20 ans d'etudes.

Les représentant d'États sont justement les choisis.
La démocratie est remplaée par la démagogie
Où va cette nation? c'est toujours de l'incertitude!

WHY GÉRARD DEPARDIEU IS SO FRENCH?...

HE'S RUDE...

HE DOES NOT LIKE SOAP...

HE DRINKS TOO MUCH...

DELIGNY '13

Dulcinée

Toi pour qui toutes les rose s'émaillent,
j'eprouve toute la gaité du ciel
En admirant ta beauté sans égale
Ta face est une impeccable merveille.

Ta salive faite du lait, du miel
Est donc la boisson la plus voluptueuse.
Ton sourire exquis est sensationnel
Ta peau est électrisante et somptueuse.

Tu es mysterieuse bien-aimée!
Tes charmants yeux de couleur irisée
Sont les astres les plus résplendissants.

Ton regard comble toutes mes envies
Le timbre de ta voix est l'harmonie
La plus enivrante. Ah! c'est excitant.

Trop Sage!

Quand l'eau est en l'excès, elle s'est débordée
Tout en devenant le pire des chaos.
La vertu peut se transformer en défaut
Lorsqu'elle est excessive et mal employée.

Ainsi, l'ane est domestiquée, mailtraitée
A cause de son tendre tempérament.
Mais le Cobra et le lion sont méchants
A leur regard, tout le monde s'est plié.

L'abus de la sagesse nous rend doux, mou.
Quand on est trop doux, on est victime de tout
Soyez pas la machine à manipuler.

Voudriez-vous qu'on vous appelle "bon dieu"?
La ferme! La qualité démesurée
Ne sera plus qu'une tare, un défaut odieux.

Let Go

There is indeed another sky
Radiant in darkness
Resplendent and pallid
Beyond this
There is indeed another sky
With gardens untended, yet evergreen
Where even bees want not for nectar
Where even the snow want not for warmth
Where even the sun want not for company
Come, it's beautiful here
There is indeed another sky
Where gravity is unwelcome
Where clouds are shelter
There is indeed another sky

Dan Kobran

At the height of summer thousands of people come from near and far, lives separated geographically and otherwise, to an Indian reservation in upstate New York for the annual Camp Bisco festival, three days of uninhibited behavior and questionable decision-making.

They catch planes, trains, buses, or in some cases, a combination of them all, finally, arriving in a circus-caravan of cars, vans, trucks, rentals, and hitchhikers. All belongings, if belongings are had, are forced into trunks, or MacGyver-ed atop vehicles by a series of bungee cords, ropes, shoe-laces-tied-to-shoe-laces, and duct tape. The rest is crammed into backpacks, suitcases, garbage bags, or just thrown askew in back seats and on floors.

Passengers are birds nested in volumes of stuff: clothes, coolers, beer, tarps, Gatorade, shoes and sandals, fold up chairs and tables, tents, stereos, lanterns, bug spray, tapestries, cigarette cartons, pillows, hula-hoops, candy, and other such necessities. The drugs are hidden in re-sealed cereal boxes, fake beer cans, secret pockets, false shoe bottoms, disguised vehicle compartments, duct-taped to inner thighs, carefully placed in luggage, and stuffed into bras, assholes, and vaginas.

Driving down I-90 West the occasional, brief blurs of long-haired passengers bobbing to invisible sounds, becomes more and more frequent.

A silver Chrysler Town and Country takes the exit and comes to a complete standstill on Mariaville Road. traffic is backed up about out a mile from the enterance of Camp Bisco X.

In a cacophony of Grateful Dead, Notorious B.I.G., Bassnectar bumping from the cars ahead, Dank, a clean-faced twenty-five year old, pounds the wheel with one hand and holds a blue tourmaline wrap in other. Meanwhile, Tuba sits reclined in the passenger seat sipping a Magic Hat can and breaking out a line of cocaine on the driver's manual.

"Tuba man, wait 'til we get in there," Dank says. "There are pigs everywhere."

"Alright, Mom."

"Seriously, we're sitting ducks right here." Dank snaps.

"I know... I know... I'm just playin'." He swallows the rest of the beer in a single pull, fixes the can under the seat, and erases the line with his nose, brushing the manual off before returning it to the center console.

Dank turns the car stereo up, focusing his eyes ahead on a scraggly figure in the distance moving towards them. A thick-haired, bare-footed, man-like child wearing mud-stained overalls, with tufts of hair growing from random areas like islands of moss on a rock, walks from car to car advertising his products. "Tabs and molly...tabs and molly...tabs and molly..."

"What's good with this Wookiee?" Tuba nods in his direction.

"We'll see in a second." Dank rolls down the window.

The Wookiee walks up to the minivan with the usual spiel.

"Tabs or molly?" His chipped smile puts his tobacco-stained teeth on display.

"What's your name Homie?" Dank inquires.

"Wolf." He bends over resting his elbows in the window giving Dank a dirty hand to dap. "A pleasure."

"Cool, cool. I'm Dank. This is my buddy, Tuba." Tuba nods. "So what's good, you don't got any nuggets?"

"You're the one named Dank," Wolf says. "You should know where the good weed's at." Wolf looks to Tuba for a confirmation laugh. Tuba smiles.

"I know man, we were too scared to bring our shit."

"Nah, I feel that. For now I'm only working with some white-on-white fluff and shards."

Looking up and down the street Wolf reaches down his overalls producing two plastic baggies. One is filled with strips of white paper, the other, filled with littler bags, each containing crystalized rocks with a slightly

purple hue.

"We're straight with that...so there's not a lot of weed around?"

"Nah man, its desert dry 'round here with all the extra heat rollin' 'round, roadblocks, under cover cops, Statey's. They been poppin' kids left n' right. It's easier to work with the paper and powders, ya dig? Not as bulky, or stinky."

"True. True. We're all set then, good looks though."

"Fo' sho, and be careful going through security if ya'll is carryin' anythin'. They're tight-asses this year. Never seen security this bad."

Dank and Tuba exchange a smile, and appreciate the heads up. Wolf continues on, and the line of traffic starts moving.

After a couple of hours of bumper-to-bumper progress the old minivan finally arrives at one of the security check points.

Armies of long-haired, shirtless freaks work: unpack tents, puzzle together the pieces, streach cords, stake holes, hang tarps.

"Good afternoon babies! I need yawl to step out the car for me." A husky-voiced biker-lady in a leather vest instructs the duo, Dank fixes his hat and wipes the wrinkles out of his shirt, Tuba tweaks his Dali-stash, both, step out of the vehicle.

"Now yawl sure there ain't no glass in here?"

"No ma'am." Dank puts on his polite, talking-to-an-authority-voice.

"And nothing else we should know 'bout?"

"No ma'am." She holds his eyes for an uncomfortably long period of time.

"A-right, check 'em out."

Two younger biker ladies enter the front and center of the van, searching under the seats, center console, and the creases of the sun roof- prying, shaking, feeling, squeezing, opening, ruffling, fingering, and shifting. Meanwhile, two prospect bikers inspect the trunk- pulling out the chairs, unwrapping both tents, and opening the coolers- when one of the prospects questions the two shovels.

"You's ain't fixin' to build a fire pit is you?" He holds a shovel in each

hand questioningly.

"No sir," Dank speaks up, "My girlfriend is a gardener." He looks Dank up and down, eventually, cramming it all back in more or less the way it was originally packed.

"All set. Yawl have fun now." The biker-lady makes a shoeing motion.

They hop back in the van turning the volume back up, and follow the line of kicked up dust through a wide-open field of wild grass.

"Tougher than usual." Tuba looks back over his shoulder.

"Better for us." Dank keeps his eyes ahead as they continue up and down a long dirt hill, moving through into a field lined by rows of cars, tents, and easy-ups, eventually, getting waved into a row of parked cars lined up in one of the back fields, farthest from the stages and dance tents.

Armies of long-haired, shirtless freaks work: unpack tents, puzzle together the pieces, stretch cords, stake holes, hang tarps. They erected a city of colors, a metropolis of music with a population of drug-crazed citizens.

Tuba buries his face into the bag. "Fruity," he pulls out a plum-sized nugget . . .

Dank and Tuba sit in two chairs under the small habitat they created by connecting two large tarps into a triangular structure, posted down by their two tents and the van, with a large pole in the center and a Scooby Doo flag rising through the ceiling standing still in the dead heat.

Listening to "Shakedown Street" on the iPod stereo connected through the window of the van, Dank sips on a Capri Sun while Tuba works on an Aquafina bottle filled with Jameson. Both are watching the flocks of people moving in the direction of the music.

A girl in an olive and gold sundress floating through the crowd—a beautiful cinnamon skinned face framed in wild layers of tangled ebony hair crowned with a white lily-petalled tiara. Her dark lips smile and her darker search move through the sea of heads, flailing arms, and grooving hands. Crystals wrapped in golden wire dance around her. She takes soft steps, steps that seem to leave no impression on the ground whatsoever. She walks in the direction of the Scooby Doo flag.

"How's my dancing bears?" The smoky voice lifts Dank out of his seat as Sun Rays Catcher gives him a light kiss on the cheek and a long hug, her crystals jangling against his.

"Not dancing yet." Dank smiles.

"I hate this waiting shit. I'm tryin' to get fucked up," Tuba chimes in.

"There's always time for that," Sun Rays Catcher leans down kissing Tuba's cheek. "What's first is always first. Work to play, Sugars. Work to play."

It's completely dark as the lights from the main stage fly, flicker, and emanate through the branches and brush dancing through the trees like strangers, as two flashlights search deeper and deeper into the woods, one leading the other.

"It's gotta be around here. I remember a tree like this." Dank spotlights a tall evergreen.

"Man, shit was like forever ago. Everything's fuckin' green now. Big fucking Christmas trees everywhere."

"Come on, just shine around."

"I been shinin'."

"There!" Dank locates the tip of the iceberg, a two-foot by two-inch pole sticking out of the ground amongst a pile of sticks, rocks, and dirt. Dank is quickly brushing aside the sticks and rocks as Tuba throws a shovel into the ground.

Back at the campsite, they open and repackage the fifteen pounds of marijuana in Dank's tent, breaking down the five pounds of Blue Dream into quaps, the five pounds of Sour Diesel into ounces, and leaving the last five pounds intact for wholesale.

"What the fuck are these anyways?" Dank inspects the last five triple vacuum-sealed bags, scissoring into one of them.

"Fuck if I know man. Its like, not labeled." Tuba has a talent for stating the obvious.

"No shit." Dank cuts through the top of the last layer. They both peer in like children into a trick-or-treat bag.

"Smells bomb." Tuba buries his face into the bag. "Fruity," he pulls out a plum-sized nugget covered in kosher salt-sized crystals, holding it between their faces. "Frosty." He rotates the nug, becoming nostalgic. "It looks kinda like the Master Kush from last year."

"Yeah but it's not though. It needs a name."

"Shit'll sell itself."

"Tubby, McDonalds doesn't sell burgers. It sells Happy Meals, Big Macs.

People don't want "bomb" weed. They want Sour Diesel, Purple Erkle, Juicy Fruit."

"But once they see this shit-"

"Nah, it has to have a name or they don't even wanna look at it."

"So what, we figure out what is?"

"No, we give it a name."

"Like what? Make one up?"

"Exactly."

"Whatever's clever, yo. What'll it be?"

"I don't know man, lets smoke it and figure it out."

"Now you're makin' sense, Cuz."

Dank can feel the smoke building in his lungs, swirling, spiraling with many thoughts in his mind, compounding and intermingling, becoming almost too much to handle, where had the time gone? What was the point? This isn't fun anymore. But it wasn't supposed to be about fun. It was about responsibility. Necessity. They need him, *he* needs him, and he would not let him down. Besides, he saw no other way. He relaxed, releasing the smoke into the air, watching the vapors disappear into a cool night.

Tuba's passed out in his chair, which is sideways on the ground, while Dank is standing on his chair, unhooking a tarp . . .

"George Kush."

Tuba begins choking in amusement. "George Kush?"

"Why the fuck not?"

"George fucking Kush!" Tuba gasps for air. "It's got some balls to it." Tuba takes his turn pulling on the long spliff, holding, "Shit why the fuck not?" He pulls again, holding, "George Kush! I'd vote for him!" Tuba begins to spasm in a coughing fit propelled by laughter.

The workload was split and the second day of the festival was spent moving up and down row after row, campsite after campsite, shaking hands, hugging, exchanging names and numbers, forgetting them instantaneously, laughing, making conversation, listening intently, feigning whatever emotion is expected, always keeping a steady pace, making false plans and

promises to return. By the time the sun sets Tuba sits in his chair smoking a victory-spliff while Dank sits in the back of the van counting piles of money. There came a gentle tap on the window and Dank's momentary fright was alleviated by two rows of little sparkling teeth.

Sun Rays Catcher slides open the door and hops in the seat next him, never once taking her eyes off his.

"Hey, Mister."

"Hey, Missy." He hands her a little backpack with dancing bears on it, which she throws over her shoulder.

"Thank ya darlin'."

"No, thank you. That covers this one, and there's half in there towards the next round."

"Fifteen again?"

"Yes, please."

"Perfect-o. I'll talk to you boys in a couple days, and we'll link up before All Good."

"Sounds good." Sun Rays Catcher leans over and pecks Dank on the cheek, and is gone before the door even closes.

Tuba's passed out in his chair, which is sideways on the ground, while Dank is standing on his chair, unhooking a tarp when Wolf comes strolling by with a new spiel. "Tabs, molly, headies... tabs, molly, headies..." He sees Dank and Tuba.

"You two again. Enjoyed yah-selves I see?" Wolf says to Dank, leaning down and tilting his head to get a better look at Tuba's drooling face plastered to the ground.

"Yeah-yeah man," Dank laughs. "Him especially."

"How the fuck he sleep like that?"

"Lots of practice." Wolf chuckles at this.

"Well, I got what yous was lookin' for earlier."

"Oh yeah, what you got for us?" Dank asks.

"This George Kush shit. Shit's fire. My buddy out West grew it."

"Cool-cool man, appreciate it, but we're all set." Dank smiles on the

inside, and a little on the outside too.

"No doubt," Wolf keeps it moving, "Catch-ya next year."

"For sure."

Going from a festival on Sunday to work on Monday morning is like waking up from a dream, faced with the reality of reality.

"Michael Stevens?"

"Here."

"Ashley Valencia?"

"Yep."

"Rebecca Whitman?"

"Here."

"Great. So last week we covered monopolies, oligopolies and perfect competition. Any questions before we move onto brand name, brand awareness, and brand identity?" There is a silence, a silence Dank had become accustom to since teaching at the community college. He doesn't blame them. Summer school is a bore. He remembers wanting to slit his own throat during biology that last summer as an undergrad. Natural sciences requirement—what the fuck did he care about mitochondria and phylums?

"Mr. Kobran?" Dank looks up slightly astonished.

"Yes?"

"I got a question." Dank looks to the dreaded teenager in the front row. The only one to pipe in all semester.

"Of course."

"Well, I was wondering how does, like...well, how does the government, like, prevent a monopoly?" Dank likes the kid, at least he asks questions.

"Great question, Jon. Last week we touched on the United States v. AT&T, but if we look more recently, the United States v. Microsoft is a perfect example. You are all familiar with Bill Gates and Microsoft obviously?" A few nod. "Good, so in 1998 . . ."

Forrest and His Nephew - Melissa Bass

Melissa Bass

The Disconnected Photographer

I almost picked up the phone,
wanting to indulge my need to hear your voice once more
and know that the vibrations in my ear were produced within
you, but I didn't....

Pick up the phone I mean.
instead I grabbed my camera and headed out the door.

I took a picture of a faded car that resembled you in our last
encounter;
moving close, I knelt beside this faded gold car
and my first thought was to press my lips to the dusty metallic
side door.

Fighting the urge, I lifted my camera and focused it,
then gently applied pressure to the trigger until I heard the
shutter *click*...

The door closed behind you.
I told you I couldn't do it, internal organs are hard to part
with,
I can't give you my heart; it's too heavily guarded by my chest.

Paul Driskill

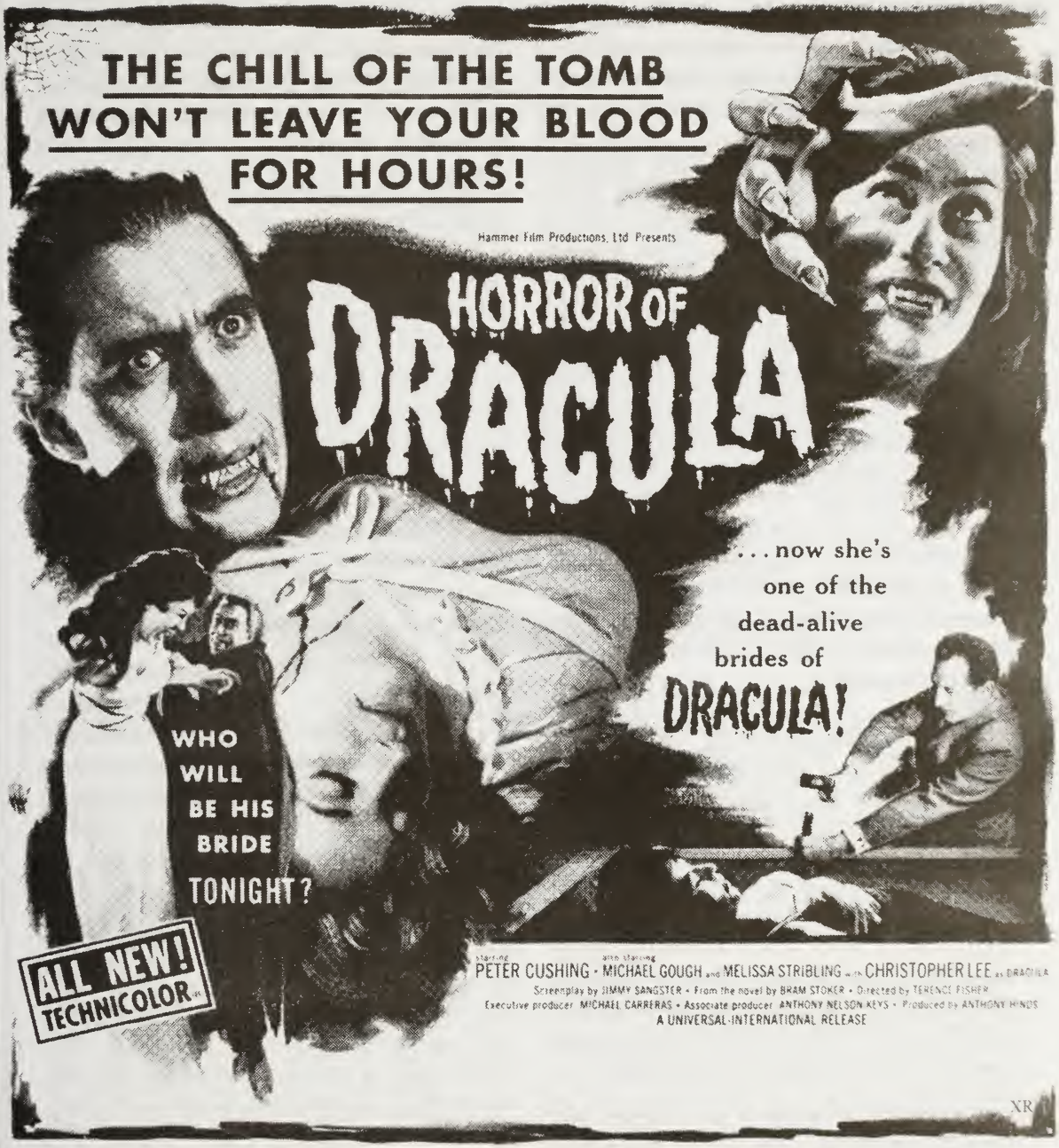
The Vampire's Primary Weapon

Dracula's Manipulation of Victims' Unconsciousness Parallels Scientific Development

The most dangerous element in Bram Stoker's Dracula is not its title character. While Dracula may perform the predatory bloodsucking reproduced and revamped in Hollywood film and popular fiction, the ability for the vampire to perform these monstrous acts depends on another recurring feature in the novel: the blurring of the boundary between consciousness and unconsciousness. Understanding this blurring is crucial to understanding the novel on a practical level. Consider the frequency of the following words within the novel: the word "sleep" occurs 303 times, variants of "hypnotism" occur 35 times, "trance" 24 times, "dream" 58 times, "nightmare" six times, and "conscious" or "unconscious" an additional 32 times. The 1997 Norton Critical Edition of Dracula is 318 pages long. The word "sleep" alone is used an average of once per page.

Most critics neglect the conscious/unconscious boundary unless they are making an argument relating to Freud. For example in "'Kiss Me with those Red Lips': Gender and Inversion in Bram Stoker's Dracula," Christopher Craft uses Freud's ideas of the id and the superego to discuss Dracula's and Van Helsing's various penetrations and methods of penetrating women and how these penetrations rupture the boarders of gender identity (Craft 127-128). Jennifer Wicke mentions Freud in connection with Mina's hypnotism at the hands of Van Helsing in her essay "Vampiric Typewriting: Dracula and its Media" (Wicke 485-486) . Even David Seed, whose primary concern is the narration of the novel in his essay "The Narrative Method of Dracula," brings up other Freudian interpretations of the female roles in Dracula (Seed 62) .

This critical compulsion to connect Dracula to the works of Freud isn't unusual. As Jarrold E. Hogle points out in his introduction to The Cambridge Companion to Gothic Fiction "Several features of the gothic [...] eventually became a basis for Sigmund


THE CHILL OF THE TOMB
WON'T LEAVE YOUR BLOOD
FOR HOURS!
Hammer Film Productions, Ltd Presents
HORROR OF
DRACULA
. . . now she's
one of the
dead-alive
brides of
DRACULA!
WHO
WILL
BE HIS
BRIDE
TONIGHT?
ALL NEW!
TECHNICOLOR
starring PETER CUSHING · also starring MICHAEL GOUGH and MELISSA STRIBLING as CHRISTOPHER LEE as DRACULA
Screenplay by JIMMY SANGSTER · From the novel by BRAM STOKER · Directed by TERENCE FISHER
Executive producer MICHAEL CARRERAS · Associate producer ANTHONY NELSON KEYS · Produced by ANTHONY HINDS
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Freud's fin de siecle sense of the unconscious" (Hogle 3). Probing Stoker's work as it relates to his contemporary (Freud published his *Studies on Hysteria* in 1895) is not a bad thing. However, much of the Freudian analysis examines the effects of unconsciousness and ignores its causes.

This blurring of the boundary between consciousness and unconsciousness is the result of the vampire's primary weapon of forced unconsciousness. This primary weapon is used chronologically before any bloodsucking and serves to destabilize the victim's sense of reality. Without this weapon, the vampire's advances would be unsuccessful, repelled by a conscious victim rather than passively embraced by an unconscious victim. The primary weapon of forced unconsciousness precedes three of the major bloodsucking scenes in the novel. Therefore, it is both primary and necessary for the vampire's bloodsucking. It is a weapon because it assaults the victim's consciousness, the victim's ability to resist, and even the victim's will to resist.

Dracula's vamping of Lucy Westenra is a perfect example of how the primary weapon functions. Lucy is the novel's innocent, naive, young symbol of the western female. Her representation as the paradigmatic, pure western female is codified in Stoker's decision to make her name mean "Western Light." Since Lucy is the character whose vampiric transformation catalyzes the vampire hunt, Craft calls the collection of men and Mina who seek to destroy the vampire threat the "Crew of Light" (Craft 130).

Dracula's penetration of Lucy occurs only after she becomes unconscious and sleepwalks from the safety of her house and is found by the count (Stoker 87-88). Lucy's dear friend Mina Murray witnesses the scene and recounts it in her journal. Although Mina cannot distinguish the figure leaning over Lucy, she writes: "Something, long and black, bending over the half-reclining white figure [Lucy]" (88). Mina may not recognize the figure, but it is obvious to the reader that the figure is Dracula.

There are several pieces of evidence supporting Dracula's use of his primary weapon of forced unconsciousness on Lucy. Lucy's "habit of walking in her sleep" (72) returns around the time the "Log of the Demeter" is recovered (81-84). The Demeter is the vessel that delivers Dracula to England and the vessel whose crew he consumes en rout. Lucy, in anticipation of Dracula's arrival, begins her unconscious forays into the night. It is unlikely that Lucy would encounter Dracula by coincidence on one of these sleepwalking adventures. Also, Lucy's consciously suppressed desire to be with multiple men is satisfied by finding Dracula.

Lucy writes in an earlier diary entry: "Why can't they let a girl marry three men, or as many as want her" (60). She apologizes for this outburst by calling her own words "heresy." In addition to taking advantage of Lucy's preexisting desire to be with multiple men, the count has also demonstrated an ability to call creatures to him and therefore may have the ability to call people to him. Renfield, a patient in Doctor Seward's insane asylum, apparently possesses a remote connection with the count and repeatedly announces "the master is at hand" (96) despite having no way of knowing that the count will be arriving in England. Lucy, similarly, seems to share an unconscious connection with the count.

When conscious, Lucy is repelled by the

vampire. When unconscious she is attracted to the vampire and even behaves like a vampire. In "Purity and Danger: Dracula, the Urban Gothic, and the Late Victorian Degeneracy Crisis," an examination the sexuality of the novel within the dynamics of late-Victorian culture, Kathleen Spencer recognizes that "when [Lucy's] conscious personality was not in command [...] her unconscious personality alone had become vampiric" (Spencer 211) . Spencer cites Lucy's tendency to thrust away the superstitious cures surrounding her (such as the host or garlic flowers) while she is asleep and unconscious despite liking them while awake (211). This thrusting away is vampiric because the flowers are repulsive to vampires. Additionally, the vampire is polyamorous. Lucy, though she would not consciously pursue multiple men, expresses a desire to do so and promptly suppresses this "heresy" (Stoker 60). When unconscious, this suppressed desire is awakened and allowed to move Lucy's body. Dracula, on the other hand, possesses no such scruples.

> Ferrier was not just making animals move, he was making them want to move.

Dracula arrives to satisfy Lucy's unconscious desire for multiple penetrations and likely targeted her because her unconscious was amenable to his approach. With his primary weapon of forced unconsciousness he is able to manipulate her so she walks to him, as though he placed an advanced order for delivery. By doing so, he is able to begin his vamping of English throats without invitation into any English homes.

In addition to Lucy's sleepwalking misadventure, the use of the vampire's primary weapon also precedes a second major scene of vampire penetration: that of Mina. Mina is a more sophisticated woman than Lucy and less archetypal of traditional western culture than her female bosom buddy, Lucy. In her article "Dracula: Stoker's Response to the New Woman," Carol Senf explores Stoker's treatment of women in Dracula and proposes that the author is ambivalent to the phenomenon of the New Woman ("Response to the New Woman" 34) . Senf points out that "Mina rejects both the forwardness and the sexual openness of the New Woman writers" (36) that connects Lucy to the New Woman (42). This difference in "degree of latent sexuality" (42) may be the key in distinguishing why the two women react differently to Dracula's primary weapon of forced unconsciousness.

Another key difference between Lucy and Mina is in the narration of their encounter with Dracula. Lucy is totally unconscious and therefore unable to recall anything that happened to her while she was out on her sleepwalking adventure. Mina, on the other hand, is able to write about her experience with Dracula and even able to describe the events leading up to Dracula's penetration out loud.

Mina sees a concentrated pillar of smoke topped with a red eye in her room. Despite recalling Jonathan Harker's narration about his encounter with the three vampire women in castle Dracula, Mina writes: "I must be careful of such dreams, for they would unseat one's reason if there were too much of

them" (Stoker 228, emphasis added). Mina is unable to accept what is happening as a real event. Her inability to distinguish between reality and dream is caused by the vampire's primary weapon. The primary weapon is pushing her into a state of semi-unconsciousness so that Dracula can vamp her.

This inability to accept reality produces one of the novel's most graphic scenes. The Crew of Light bursts into the room, having been given a tip that Mina is in danger by madman Renfield and witnesses an unexpected scene. "[Mina's] white nightdress was smeared with blood, and a thin stream trickled down the man's bare breast" (247). Mina and Dracula are embracing, one drinking from the other, the horror and blood of the scene a dreadful reality made possible by Dracula's primary weapon of forced unconsciousness.

> Dracula's bite and bloodsucking is a smokescreen for his more insidious assult on free will and volition

While Mina is immobilized by Dracula's primary weapon, Lucy is given physical mobility. In an unconscious state, Lucy pursues her desire to be with multiple men. Lucy becomes, in this sense, a mobile unconscious. This notion of an unconscious that is able to move as though it possessed conscious volition relates directly to 19th century developments in brain science and specifically developments in the field of cerebral localization.

In her insightful essay "Bram Stoker's Dracula and Cerebral Automatism," Anne Stiles explores how Dracula fits into the volatile social context of brain science, especially cerebral localization. Stiles argues that: "Dracula was part of the backlash that followed upon [...] changes in psychology. The vampire villain, who transforms people into soulless automata and ruthlessly experiments upon human beings can be seen as a mad scientist" (Stiles 55) . Dracula is reminiscent of one "mad scientist" in particular: Sir David Ferrier.

Ferrier pioneered research into the field of cerebral localization. Cerebral localization, as the name suggests, localizes the functions of the brain by stimulating cortical regions and mapping the behavior of the test subject. For example, if region A is stimulated and the subject's left leg kicks, region A controls the subject's left leg. By mapping out the regions of the brain and their function, cerebral localizationists like Ferrier hoped to better science's understanding of the human brain.

Although Ferrier was certainly not the only scientist researching cerebral localization, he is significant in relation to the novel because Doctor Seward, a stalwart scientist himself, mentions Ferrier. "Had I even the secret of [Renfield's mind...] I might advance my own branch of science to a pitch compared with [...] Ferrier's brain knowledge" (Stoker 71). The brain knowledge Seward references was extremely controversial at the time because of its challenge to free will and its undermining theological belief in the soul. Many 19th century lay people found Ferrier's experiments disturbing because "Ferrier was not just making animals move, he was making them want to move [...], demonstrating that an electrical stimulus could be substituted for volition" (Stiles 65). This

Unlike Ferrier's animals, Dracula's victims are able to recall, explain, and reflect on their unconscious experience because of their liminal status between total consciousness and total unconsciousness.

concept of non-voluntary motion in Ferrier's animal experiments resembles Lucy's sleepwalking.

Senf notes the extent of this unconscious manipulation in her essay about the novel's internal struggle between Dracula and science, "Gothic Monster Versus Modern Science in Dracula," when she observes that "many of the important events in [Lucy's] life take place while she is either unconscious or asleep. Even her succumbing to Dracula and her subsequent fall into vampirism are presented as being largely unconscious rather than the result of conscious choice" ("Gothic Monster" 20) . Stile's likening of Dracula to Ferrier and his volition-robbing experiments and Senf's observation that Lucy's transformation takes place while she is unconscious leads to an important conclusion about the vampire's primary weapon: each victim actively desires Dracula (or the vampire women) while unconscious. Just as Ferrier is able to make unconscious animals "want to move" (Stiles 65), Dracula is able to make his unconscious victims want to submit. While Lucy may provide the most obvious example of this unconscious desire to be with the vampire, Jonathan Harker also demonstrates an unconscious desire.

While in Castle Dracula at the beginning of the novel, Harker wanders into a room and felt "sleep was upon [him]" (Stoker 42). Harker then falls into a state of physical immobility but conscious awareness as the three vampire women materialize. The language he uses in this scene builds oxymora, effectively splitting Harker in two. Examine the following lines: "I felt in my heart a wicked, burning desire that they should kiss me with those red lips"; "It was like an intolerable, tingling sweetness"; "looking out under my eyelashes in an agony of delightful anticipation" (42). The word desire, normally meaning something pleasurable, is paired with the negative word "wicked." "Sweetness" is paired with "intolerable." Harker's "delightful anticipation" is agonizing. Harker is employing rhetorical tactics to blur boundaries. In this instance, he is blurring the boundary between desire and disgust rather than consciousness/unconsciousness.

In addition to building oxymora, this language creates dueling Harkers: one of consciousness and one of unconsciousness. Harker's conscious self, a man who will eventually be married to Mina Harker, resists the approach of the women, utilizing words like "wicked," "intolerable," and "agony." Meanwhile, the unconscious Harker voices his longing for the women using the words "desire", "sweetness", and "delightful anticipation." The conscious and unconscious Harkers are battling for dominance.

In "Castle, Coffin, Stomach: Dracula and the Banality of the Occult," Phillip Holden explores how magic and the occult relate to the social norms and individualization at the time of the novel's publication (Holden 470) . Holden argues "there is danger [in the novel] of course, but it is a danger which can and will be averted by self-governance, by the exercise of the will" (478). In this view, much of the danger in the novel, namely being vamped by Dracula or the three women,

could have been avoided by conscious volition. The inverse of this notion that willpower can overcome danger is also true: without self-governance or the exercise of the will, there is no hope of avoiding danger. Dracula's bite and bloodsucking is a smokescreen for his more insidious assault on free will and volition. Only through a subversion of free will by the vampire's primary weapon of forced unconsciousness can the bloodsucking be achieved.

Ferrier's work in cerebral localization parallel's Dracula's primary weapon of forced unconsciousness. Ferrier writes in his 1886 publication The Functions of the Brain in his chapter titled "Instinctive or Emotional Expression:"

"As all the physical manifestations of feeling are capable of being called for in animals deprived of their cerebral hemispheres, which alone are the substrata of consciousness, we must regard [feelings or emotions] as merely the reflect or instinctive response of centres [sic] in which sensory impressions are correlated with the motor, vasomotor, and secretory [sic] apparatus." (Ferrier 147)

This bland writing describes the vampire weapon using scientific terminology. Even after removing the cerebral hemispheres (which Ferrier views as the seat of consciousness), Ferrier can elicit feelings and emotions by stimulating deeper brain regions not controlled by the consciousness.

Although Ferrier is cited in the novel, he is neither the only scientist nor the first to realize that advances in brain science challenge conventional notions of free will. An earlier publication by physician Henry Maudsley called The Physiology and Pathology of the Mind (1868), Maudsley writes apropos to the vampire's primary weapon, that "Those who fondly think they act with free will [...] dream with their eyes open" (Maudsley 171) . Mina certainly dreams with her eyes open, able to recall the frightening events of her dangerous encounter with Dracula. The only problem is, what she experienced in the dream was real and she was robbed of her will to resist. Like Maudsley and Ferrier, Dracula has successfully robbed her of her volition, reduced her down to a machine of unconscious, un-willed consumption. Dracula excises, through the vampire weapon, consciousness and manipulates a victim's deep-rooted feelings or emotions so that he or she is amenable to the vampire's approach.

Unlike Ferrier's animals, Dracula's victims are able to recall, explain, and reflect on their unconscious experience because of their liminal status between total consciousness and total unconsciousness. Mina, for example, tells the men when they walk in on her and Dracula during their bloody embrace that she "did not want to hinder him" and adds "I suppose [the desire not to hinder Dracula] is a part of the horrible curse" (Stoker 251). The "horrible curse" is the active desire (as opposed to passive acceptance) displayed in all three victims.

Dracula's primary weapon of forced unconsciousness gothicizes this scientifically-incited degeneration of volition while enabling the vampire to drink blood from English throats. Although the vampire is best known for his bloodsucking, without his primary weapon, Dracula would be unable to overcome his victims because they would be able to consciously resist him.

Flowers

Midori Gleason

Absence Sonnet

He asked me to keep close to him, so when
I leapt to fly I threw him my absence:
A slab of grief to hold, to fold or bend,
To stomp upon, to hiss and scorn. Yet since
I've lacked my lack there is no space to find
Within my mind, crammed blind with tight todos,
Elephant weighted, cluttering claws reside
By junkshop clocks, appliances misused.
Hard-packed link locked stock stiff memories can't
Elbow, undust, bust through and all along,
What can he do with nothing but this rant?
Guilt's bare comfort, void are my claims to wrongs.
They do not leap between my love and harm.
Nor cradle him between my chest and arms.

Natasha Leullier

Yellow-Eyed Men

Darius concentrates on the babble of the nearby stream—the one where he often fetched water—and the scuttling of insects beneath his ear, but he can still hear the muffled screams. He presses the left side of his body deep into the log's soft vegetation, as though to disappear entirely. The old tree fell decades ago, during the greatest storm the village had known. It was once a towering elm, taller and thicker than any currently left in the forest. Now it is completely covered in moss and fungus, as the humidity from the stream had spread like an infection.

The man to his right died when he hit the ground, and his skin is now cold and wet, his arm stiff. The man on top of Darius, however, is still breathing, a raspy, whistling sound that reminds him of the noise the wind sometimes made when it twirled in the empty fireplace. Those were cold nights, with wood too wet to light and his family's bony cow serving as their only source of heat.

The man, named Cade, dying on top of Darius is hot. He fought alongside Darius when the arrows pierced him—three through the chest, like a knife through soft butter. Cade stood still and gasped, then stepped backwards and tripped over the corpse of a comrade. He collapsed onto Darius, who was twelve but still fighting. They both went down with a bone-breaking crash, Darius's old butcher's knife firmly clutched in his hand. The battle raged and Darius, lodged between different kinds of dead, went unseen.

The Yellow-Eyed men always attack an hour before dawn, bearing torches in the dim light. Yellow flames danced in their eyes. They always vanish by sunrise, leaving villages empty of life, but otherwise intact. They trade

Refugees bringing strong arms and gold—who would turn them away?

in people.

It is mostly over now, Darius knows, because the high pitched wails tell him they have found the women and children. His mother and sisters, including sixteen-year-old Audrey. His big sister cared for him when he was sick, ruffled his hair playfully and always kissed him goodnight.

Darius should be terrified, "trembling like a leaf," his father would say. His heart beats fast, but he remains listless and calm, almost sleepy, as each minute stretches out. He finds himself thinking of odd things, like how much he hates Cade.

Brave and handsome Cade, whose family came from the town over the mountain range, where the Yellow-Eyed men reign. The village had welcomed the Overholtzers and their brawny son, and their sack of golden chalices, candlesticks and candelabras. Refugees bringing strong arms and gold—who would turn them away?

The village girls became silly and wore bows in their hair, even sweet, down-to-earth Audrey. It quickly became obvious that Cade had eyes only for her, with her shiny red hair, sturdy frame and straight teeth.

"Good hips for bearing sons," agreed Darius' father when Cade requested her hand.

Cade blushed and mumbled something about "love."

Darius did not want his sister to stop being his sister. If Audrey married Cade, she would move to his house and have babies, and would have no more time for him, like his own mother now, always with a newborn at her teat. Now Cade's blood is dripping onto Darius' forehead, and that seems like a fine thing.

Darius' fingers ache, locked around the knife he didn't have a chance to use. The fighting was quick and intense, and onslaught aimed at the strong. Within what seemed like the first ten seconds of battle he saw his father struck by a blow to the head, finished by one thrust of a blade. His father had given him the old butcher's knife, and Darius had oiled the rusty blade until it shined as well as it could. He remembered the time, years past, when his father used the same knife to outline a square in the pink flesh of a large hog, lifting the skin, a window onto its slimy innards.

Darius wrinkled his nose and stared. His father pointed towards the liver, then poked Darius's own belly.

"You mean I have one of those?" Darius said in mild disgust, hands on his abdomen.

"That and everything else. We're not so different from the pigs, and that's good to know in battle."

"What about the Yellow-Eyed ones?"

"They have the devil in their head, but bodies are just like ours."

From that day, Darius observed the pigs his father butchered and often wished he could kill one himself. His father always did it by slitting their throats, bleeding them while they squealed to their death. No part was wasted. When the honey melons growing in the garden were ripe, Darius loved to slice them. He stabbed them wildly and pretending the hard, slick thud was that of the enemy's chest cavity.

Here, with the earthy smell of decaying wood doing little to cover Cade's sweat and acrid breath, the thought of cutting the enemy's flesh repulses him. And it seems a shame to sully his blade when there is so little left to save.

He tries shifting his position, to catch a glimpse of the events. Sprawled on his back, with Cade's face nestled against his shoulder, his only option is to tilt his head backwards, hoping the movement won't draw attention. It's hard to make out what's happening, with people looking as though walking on their heads. With the light of day almost upon them, the Yellow Eyed Men dressed in black appear less sinister, their eyes dull. Some wipe their blades on the grass while others round up the last of the weeping women.

Darius sees a flash of red, and wonders if it's Audrey with her fiery hair, or just more blood. He feels a pang of regret, but continues to stare, immobile as his kinsfolk are marched away, easterly, towards the mountains. Besides, he knows they will survive, and he would have lost Audrey, anyhow. She can still have babies, on the other side of the mountain range.

The sun is high and flies are buzzing by the time Darius extricates himself. Cade is dead, as are all of the other men, young and old. He heads directly to the small wooden structure that served as church and council hall. He bags the chalices, candelabras and all things shiny and marches west. As he passes through the village gate, he smiles to himself. Perhaps in the next village he will be greeted as the new "Cade," by eager parents and girls wearing pretty bows.

Welina Farah

Studies in Puerto Rico

The Puerto Rican Independence Party (PIP) was protesting Obama's arrival. I was on the island for a summer studies program, roaming with the group I studied with. Before our group approached the protest Professor Galanes, our guide, warned us to stay close and not to do anything stupid. We were Americans within a protest against American rule. I looked over to the person closest to me and asked, "Wanna go in?" It was Allie, a girl from Washington University. She was very quiet and not much of a participant in group conversations. I wanted to learn more about her.

"Yeah, sure!" she said without hesitation. So we went off, strangers in a stranger land. As we walked deeper into the yelling and sign-waving, I said, "Stay close."

We looked the part of tourists: backpacks filled to the brim with sun block, water, snacks, sunglasses and publications of sociological theories; clothes that didn't come from the island; burnt skin that was raw to the touch (maybe that was just me); cameras that cost more than our flight; and worst yet we could only speak English. We wandered around, snapping photos, on our right an American flag was burning and to our left a banner reads "Fuck Obama!"

I was in San Juan studying abroad and my president, the one I voted for, the one I believed in was in the same city? And these people wanted him out? He is the second US president to visit PR (EVER) and I'm here too?

Nationalism is beaten into you from a young age, as it is anywhere else on the globe. As one grows older, the propaganda becomes stronger because, even as we become more aware of our surroundings. Seeing people resisting American help was something I never thought was possible, rather, never thought anyone would want to resist our help! We're America, the land of the free and home of the brave! And you don't want our help?! What's wrong with this picture?

What would happen if Puerto Rico became the 51st state in America? The official language would change from Spanish to English. But Spanish is not just a language in Puerto Rico, it's their culture.

When we reconnected with the main group, my mind kept drifting back to the man with the "Viva Puerto Rico Libre" shirt. I remember the "i" in viva was a closed fist, the one usually used when speaking of Black liberation movements. It stands for solidarity, strength, and defiance, everything the independentistas represent. It's crazy how much the Puerto Ricans get pushed to the side when it comes to rights. Puerto Ricans are US citizens, but as long as they stay in Puerto Rico they cannot vote in elections and they do not have any kind of representation in the Senate. They also do not pay federal taxes on income received from island sources. Instead, they pay customs taxes paid to the federal treasury, but this money gets returned to Puerto Rico.

Let's just hope no one gets too damaged from this process to independance.

Jacob Aguiar

Steeped in Superstition

Perhaps it is just good parenting to keep your kids from walking under ladders or breaking mirrors, but why should killing a spider make it rain? While sometimes nonsensical on the surface, my mother's superstitions unite my family.

A great example of this is the family baptisms. My mother saw too it that all her sons were baptized and received first communion. As grandmother to my older brother's kids she made it clear that they should also be baptized. She did not do this because of some deep religious belief but instead because of a superstitious belief that her own mother, long dead, is watching her.

"I'm more afraid of my mother than anything else. I do not want to go over and meet her and not having done something I should have."

So my brothers and I have come to understand the ceremony not as an indoctrination into a faith, but a tribute to an ancestor. Not one of us pretends to be a good Catholic; most of the ceremony is spent holding back snickers as the priest speaks of un-ending commitment to the ways of the church. But no one quibbles about going, no one points of the silliness of it.

Many members of my far-flung and loosely connected family are invited to and arrive at each baptism. We are a ragtag group united mostly by affair and patronage rather than by law and blood. A collection of sordid pasts and failed marriages we unify around the baptism: the introduction of a new member into the clan.

Superstition to me means a sense of control. To have a superstitious belief is to admit vulnerability to fate and at the same time to take step to control it. Superstition is like always betting black at the roulette wheel. When it lands on red well that is just how it goes, but when it lands on black it is because you rubbed that bald guys head. And while in the back of your head you know the odds are 50-50 you still rub that guys head not just to make the ball land on black, but to feel like you did all could possible do to make t land on black, and one way or another fate will reward you for your homage.

Kafka

Off

Natasha Leullier

The Countdown

The clock had been ticking for as long as he could remember. As a small child Michael heard the tick tock as he entertained himself in the living room, lying on the thick red rug, waiting. He stared at the room and its individual objects, inventing a story for each. The clock did not bother him then, but sometimes it sounded more like a *tsk*, the *tsk*, *tsk* of a mother scolding her child. The rhythm became urgent, as though time had sped up. This he heard in the night, awake or dreaming, when he walked by the cellar door or when his father stirred the cubes in his evening booze.

"Toward the end of time the world will grow ill, truly worse than it is now. Wretched things will be heaped upon us, and the planet will no longer be safe, at least until December 21st when all will come to a halt. The 12th planet will finally appear in the night sky, and alignment will be achieved. The end will seem nigh, and yet the people will become calm and hopeful during the last minutes of respite—the Earth will give off a sense of peace," intones Michael. He smiles to himself, enjoying the power of his own words.

That is how Michael imagines things will unravel, near the end of the calendar. And who better to know this than the clock himself? He had long come to the conclusion that he was time impersonated, his innards wiring and his heart the beating timepiece.

When the worst is expected, hopeful fools will always be lulled by the calm before the storm, he thinks. With their guns, underground shelters,

DELZANT

and canned goods, they will believe themselves prepared. But when the earth does not immediately shatter and engulf all things living, the wicked will think themselves spared, the good will think themselves chosen. But Michael knows better. There will be no escape, and the final countdown will have just begun.

From the cellar he often heard voices, men and women, laughing hysterically. He was felt always left out and could only wonder at the white, paint-chipped door. He would sit on the cold, dirty linoleum of the kitchen floor, imagining the fun he must be missing. His father assumed he was too young to understand, but Michael was always listening to the adults, interpreting their words as best he could. Once, his father had compared the neighbor's dog to his mother; Michael understood this was no laughing matter. That day, long ago he opened the white door—he would share in this joke—and in doing so brought up a waft of incense and cold sweat, and laughter that turned into screams as they reached his ears.

We must be the Ones, the survivors of Armageddon, that will inherit the Earth

Michael believes that as all gaze upon the firmament, waiting for their demise to come from above, this is when the dead will reach out from their graves and tickle the unsuspecting feet of the living. As they wrestle the dirt to reach the light, they will remember their hunger. This part is not in the *Popol Vuh*. The ancient Maya had not seen *Dawn of the Dead*. Young Michael had, and he had something similar in the cellar. They were not truly zombies, and after seeing a documentary on Santeria he later learned they had been drugged. But if the living could become zombie-like, then why not the dead?

Then will come the solar flares, so that living flesh sizzles and bone crumbles. Earth will become a marshmallow, melting and white with heat. The last few survivors will hear the wind above; it must be a storm. It is nothing but fire. Fire like the ball of heat that flowed from Michael's mouth to his stomach the time he stole a taste from his father's glass. His mother disapproved of alcohol, as she disapproved of most things beyond breathing and praying. She did not tolerate her husband and his pagan practices. She feared them, and counted her prayer beads out loud.

Michael suspects the last few to survive, atheists and religious fanatics alike, will have simultaneous epiphanies in which they fancy themselves filled with grace.

"We must be the Ones, the survivors of Armageddon that will inherit the Earth and repopulate it with acts of kindness. The World has been cleansed," chants Michael. "And of course they would think this, since near

the end, society will have taken a turn for the worst: murder, disease, war, economic and moral degradation!" Michael laughs and beams at his audience.

Michael's daughters, small blond children of two and four, smile back. They are nervous and confused, but even now they trust him; he has always been a gentle, loving father. At bedtime he tells stories, wonderful magical stories of talking animals, hidden gardens and enchanted fruit.

"Then tell me, why did the world not end with Nazi Germany? Were those not trying times?" he continues, gesticulating wildly. His wife jerks her head, nods, as tears stream down her cheeks, wetting the duct tape that holds her mouth shut. But her eyes are pleading and full of questions.

"I know what you are thinking, love. For a time I wasn't worried, but then the clock started ticking faster...*tsk*, *tsk*, *tsk*, and everything was pointing towards 2012. It's all over the media! Websites, documentaries, even the ancient texts! The Maya themselves predicted it," he explains, as he smoothes out her hair, removing a few strands from her trembling brow.

When the ground starts to shake, Michael knows it will not be the four horsemen of the Apocalypse, despite all that his mother said. The earthquakes will sound more like beating drums, the ones his father used to play. The tectonic plates will shake and bend as the poles reverse, and the plates will shift, free from the magnetic field that he thinks holds them in place. The Earth's crust will collapse like a soggy cracker as the oceans wash over it.

"Do you understand? It's not about good or evil. It will simply be the end; no new beginning after December 21st. How could there be? The calendar ends," says Michael, hands held together in gentle supplication. "This is for the best, trust me."

He starts counting the pills; the dosage must be exact. The sound they make as they fall from the bottle to the countertop matches the ticking in his head.

"Now open your mouths."

He feeds them to his daughters. He waits to ensure they have swallowed and then unties his wife's bonds. It is too late to fight; defeated she willingly takes the pills and hurries over to her children. Michael leads them to the sofa and grabs a thick, leather-bound book from the shelf. Before they go to sleep, he will read them one last fairytale, his favorite of all.

"In the beginning God created the Heaven and the Earth..."

Jenn Tonelli

Pause

And then it was over.
Piece by piece
We picked up our things that lay scattered
All over the room.
In the corner of the bed I found your Pride
Right next to my shirt; it was wrinkled now.
On the chair sat your Fear, seemingly never failing to push
My happy Hopes to the ground – which is where your (over)Thinking
Cap was found (fizzled out and sparking from over use)—
One by one, our things were put back,
On shelves, in drawers, on our bodies,

And the sleepless night dragged on.
Tossing.
Turning.
Remembering.
Holding on.
Hitting the pause button on reality,
because it's always too late to rewind
(or too early to try to fast forward).

As the sun rose, our eyes pretended not to notice.
And our bodies laid perfectly intertwined
until the clock started moving again.
Unpause.
We walked slowly down and blindly out
Into the sun, into comforting fall air,
(Winter is closing in slowly. Smell it?)
"We'll talk soon"
But I couldn't speak, as if it was my tongue
I lost among the things on your floor.

It wasn't.
I lost my heart.

Jenn Tonelli

Seasons of Us

We never blossomed carefully with a warm spring rain.
Summer found us on a breeze and
we were already in bloom. Our passion peaked
before it should have, but we had no control
as to the color of our petals or the height of our stems.
As summer faded, we followed its lead.
Somehow, parts of fall were just as warm as summer had been,
and our petals basked in all the suns' rays.
It seems Nature was as confused as we were
because the weather waxed and waned as we wondered in awe.
Despite the depth and purity of our hearts,
Winter soon came to wash it all away.

We live in traces of summer and flashbacks of fall.
In the cruel, coldness of winter we dwindled. However naïve or falsified,
I wait, longing for spring, to be reborn,
and blossom in its warm, comforting rain.

Christina Spinelli

Attempt at painting a universe #1

This is where we could swim all day long & maybe all night.
I would compliment this woman's hat "what a lovely blue hat!" I'd say.
you could read like this man
someone would be buried... & then unearthed

Jacqueline Perry

The Woman in the Red Coat

Women who wear perfume are never happy. That's what Tessie thought to herself each day as she leaned upon her elbows and watched herds of shoppers shuffle past the fragrance counter where she worked.

On summer mornings the department store was invariably busy. When there weren't any customers at Tessie's counter, she entertained herself by watching the women stroll past. They were all buttoned up into designer jeans and sweaters and coats and hats and scarves, and you couldn't see their faces either, not really. They all wore masks of rouge, lipstick and mascara that made every pair of eyes look bright and innocent and emotionless.

Tessie blinked at her reflection in the mirror propped on the counter. She was fourteen. She had a pale face framed by blonde curls that slumped across her shoulders. She looked rather plain, Tessie thought; her face was simple.

Tessie could always identify people by the perfume they wore. Her mother sprayed on a light vanilla every morning, a sweet scent that got caught in Tessie's hair whenever her mother hugged her. At school, her stern English teacher filled the room with a sharp floral aroma as soon as she strutted in. And her favorite co-worker, Dixie, wore a heavy perfume as sweet and thick as the accent that dripped off her every word.

"You know, hun," she'd drawl, leaning lazily against the sales counter, "I don't get how y'all deal with this freezing weather up here. Down in Baton Rouge, it was warm and sunny year 'round."

Dixie was a petite girl who wore rumpled skirts and heavy black eyeliner that was always smudged in little clouds around her lashes. She never stood still. She chewed on her lip or tapped her foot or ran her fingers through her bleach-blonde locks. At work, Dixie and Tessie would slouch side-by-side along the counter and watch customers bustle by. Dixie drummed her nails on the glass and burst out in random exclamations.

"Look, kiddo, look at that guy trying on that weird hat," she said. "God, I'm tired, Tessie. The baby kept me up until two o'clock this morning."

Dixie was ten years older than Tessie. Tessie wondered if something would happen to *her* within the next decade to make her the same way.

It was Dixie who first spotted the woman in the red coat. Tessie was dusting the display case while Dixie stared into a mirror and poked at the bags under her eyes.

"I look like a troll," she whined. Her voice was husky but feminine. "I swear to God, Tess, if that baby doesn't start sleeping through the night, I'm going to look like Betty White before I'm thirty."

The air around them was filled for a moment by cherry blossoms

She smelled like sticky fruit when she swished by. Suddenly, Dixie was clutching Tessie's arm and pointing at a shopper across the room.

"Hey," she said, "check out that weird lady over there."

The woman wore a red peacoat and sunglasses that obscured her entire face. She was a large woman, teetering on her high heels as she walked.

"Good day," Tessie greeted as the woman approached her counter.

The woman only nodded and smiled weakly. She was aged but not quite old. Her gaze rested on a sign stating *Feel free to sample our luxury fragrances.* There were perhaps a dozen bottles and vials strewn about the surface; the woman selected one at random and spritzed it on a wrist. The air around them was filled for a moment by cherry blossoms. Then, just as quickly as she'd come in, the woman slipped out the store exit. Tessie shrugged. Working in retail, she'd met enough strange customers to make nearly everyone seem normal.

During the lunch hours, all of the cashiers would crowd around the table in the break room. Tessie sat in the middle, surrounded by her nine co-workers and a melty mix of different aromas. They ate granola bars and complained about men. Some girls snuck cigarettes if the boss wasn't around.

"Men are all stupid," one girl would gripe.

"Mm-hmm," agreed another, "You can't trust a single one of 'em."

Dixie would tousle Tessie's hair and say, "You remember that, kid, for when you're older. Don't let nobody steal your heart."

The following morning, the red peacoat woman wandered in at exactly nine o' clock. From Tessie's counter she selected a light tropical fragrance and splashed a bit onto her wrist. Then she gave Tessie the same nod and slunk back off to the parking lot.

The next day, the woman chose a sugary berry perfume; the day after, a bitter herb-like scent. She never spent more than three minutes inside the store, and not once did she pull out her wallet.

"I wonder what that woman's doing," Tessie wondered out loud.

"I dunno, hun," Dixie said, snapping her gum.

She was humming along to the radio that played behind her. Lately, Dixie had gotten into the habit of toting her old boom box into work and letting it blare the country station all day. She was fond of wailing the words to sappy heartbreak songs until Tessie grew red and shushed her.

When Dixie drummed her fingers on the counter, Tessie noticed a pebble-sized diamond gleaming on her left hand

The next morning, the woman used a orchid-scented perfume. Tessie's boss also announced that she'd taken out an ad in the newspaper, and she wanted to snap a photo of all the employees for it. The girls groomed themselves like models to take the picture. They rimmed their eyes with black and their lips with red, and they crowded into the bathroom to wipe the stains off their uniforms with paper towels.

"Come here, sweetheart, lemme do your makeup," Dixie told Tessie.

She pulled Tessie's hair into a dignified updo and streaked Tessie's eyelids with shimmery blue. Then she swiped a vial of flowery perfume and squirted it on the back of Tessie's neck. When Tessie walked across the room, she smelled like roses, and at first couldn't recognize herself beneath the foreign scent.

The girls stood in front of the cosmetics counters and wrapped their arms around each other, beaming widely. The boss snapped the photo. When the ad ran the next day, Tessie tore it from a newspaper and looked at it long and hard. In the photo were ten happy blondes made beautiful

by smiles and heavy eyeshadow. They all had wide eyes and crisp matching uniforms. Tessie studied herself, standing in the middle. All dolled up, she was giggling and clutching onto the hands of Dixie and one other coworker. Tessie folded up the clipping and slid it into her purse.

The weeks passed. July became August. The woman in the red coat still managed to discover a new scent to sample every day, sometimes having to dig to the backs of shelves to uncover one she hadn't tried before. Dixie grew giddy and whispery all the time. She spent long hours twirling her hair and staring dreamily at the ceiling, and refused to divulge to Tessie what she was thinking of.

On the thirty-fourth day that Tessie saw the red peacoat woman, Dixie showed up half an hour late for her shift, and when Dixie drummed her fingers on the counter, Tessie noticed a pebble-sized diamond gleaming on her left hand.

"You're getting *married*?" Tessie shrieked. Dixie giggled girlishly and held a finger up to Tessie's lips. "Shh, sweetie, don't broadcast it to the nation."

"You didn't tell me!" Tessie accused.

"It just happened last night," Dixie told her. She folded her knuckles and admired the ring. "It's gorgeous, ain't it? All new and shiny."

"Who is he?" Tessie wanted to know.

"Guy I've been seeing."

"Do you love him?"

Dixie didn't answer. She was too busy spraying on her favorite perfume.

The woman in the red coat showed up at nine o' clock sharp, just as Tessie had come to expect. She browsed around the perfume counter for a while, frowning as she examined each bottle. She'd already tried every perfume, Tessie realized. Resigned, the woman walked off to explore other departments.

Fifteen minutes later, the woman returned to Tessie's counter, dragging a large luggage set behind her. "Can you help me, miss?" she asked. "I'd like to purchase this, but there wasn't anyone at the register in the luggage department."

"Certainly," Tessie answered. She swiped the woman's credit card through the machine and handed her the receipt.

"I don't mean to be a pain," the woman said, "But do you think you could

help me bring these to my car? It's awfully heavy to carry them myself."

Tessie took the largest two suitcases and followed the woman into the parking lot. The two of them loaded each piece into the trunk of the woman's car, working silently beside each other.

"You're a very sweet girl," the woman remarked as they finished.

"Thank you," said Tessie.

"You do your job well. Do you like working at that department store all the time?"

Tessie shrugged. "I like it enough. It's just a summer job."

"I bet you have big plans for your future, young girl like you. Do you know what you want to do?"

"I'm going to be a singer," Tessie said.

The woman smiled. "When I was your age, I was going to be a singer, too," she said. "I was going to be on broadway. See my name in lights. Pick up flowers outside my dressing room every night."

The next day, ten o' clock arrived, and Tessie still hadn't seen the woman in the red coat.

"What happened?"

The woman shrugged. "I don't know. Time happened." She opened her car door and settled herself into the driver's seat. "Well, I won't keep you from your work. Have a good day, now."

Tessie took a deep breath. Finally she asked, quietly, "Why do you come in to sample perfume every day? You could just buy a bottle."

"But then I would be stuck with just one perfume," the woman said.

"It'd be less trouble to have one at home."

"Sometimes, you just need to be someone different every day," the woman said. "Well, you have a nice day."

"You too," Tessie said. "Thanks for shopping with us. Come again." The woman drove off, and Tessie walked back into work.

The next day, ten o' clock arrived, and Tessie still hadn't seen the woman in the red coat. She peered around the store. Everything else was normal. Women were shopping. Dixie sat next to her, thumbing through a magazine and lip syncing some love song that had come on the radio.

The smoke alarm began screeching at ten-thirty. One moment, Tessie saw a single lit match abandoned on the floor. A red-coated figure was seen slipping out the door like lightning. The next moment, there were tall billows of flames, spreading, licking every counter. They reached pyramids of stacked perfume bottles and erupted into vicious blazes. Tessie blinked, and suddenly the fire was consuming the whole store. Perfume bottles shattered on the ground and were devoured by hungry flames.

There was screaming. Fire alarms and sirens rang in Tessie's ears. She was suddenly aware of Dixie grabbing her hand and pulling her towards the exit.

"Come on, Tess, are you crazy?"

Tessie could barely breathe. The air smelled like burnt wood mixed with perfume; she couldn't tell whether this was good or bad.

Outside Tessie sobbed. Dixie wrapped her arms around Tessie's belly and pulled her in close.

"Shh, honey," she soothed.

There were firetrucks. There were police cars. Officers went around assuring everyone that no one was injured in the fire; every person had safely evacuated the building. Only merchandise had been destroyed, including thousands of dollars worth of makeup and perfume.

When Tessie stopped crying she was still clinging onto Dixie's left hand, the one with the diamond. She gave it a squeeze. Then she realized she was still carrying her purse. Tessie reached inside and fished out the newspaper clipping she'd saved. She stared at the photograph: the ten most poised, most polished, most happy girls in the world. In the photograph, she was happy. In the photograph, she was not alone. In the photograph, things would stay the same forever.

Tessie ran a hand through her hair. She smelled like fire and perfume at the same time. She looked up at the remains of the department store, reduced to a fiery rubble. Then she looked back down at the snapshot in her hands. It was all she had left of her time at the perfume store.

Odd Refraction in the Bus Stop Window.

City in Perspective

Allan-Michael Brown

One Cold Night

I would play pranks on my roommate, Peter. Every Sunday, before he went to church, I'd slip a photo of a naked woman in his Bible. But he wised up, and started shaking his Bible vigorously before he left for church. When Peter would bring over a friend from church, I would sit close to him, try to hold his hand and caress him affectionately. It was exciting, making him uncomfortable with my gay. It made me gleeful. Other times, I'd put my friend Tracey's underwear and lingerie into Peter's laundry bag because Peter would bring his laundry home every other weekend for his mom to do. Peter would always laugh and blush. It was all in good fun. His innocence was never broken or questioned by anyone.

Tracey was a little woman with silent beauty. She also had a knack for crafts. She would fold paper and make little three-dimensional shapes, mostly stars and hearts. She made hundreds of these, and leave them all over the apartment. She and Peter would race each other to see how many hearts each could make in a week. She would always win. Peter started spending time with her outside of our apartment.

For a while, Peter didn't seem like a roommate. He seemed like a ghost that would come and go sporadically, only to appear in the flesh when Tracey was by his side. One night when Tracy was over, Peter took a dollar bill out of her pocket and made a heart that was distinctive from the ones Tracy usually made. It wasn't merely three-dimensional like the othersl; it was flat, he said it had a flower popping out of it. The flower looked more like an Iron Cross to me. He placed it softly in my hand. I still have it.

One cold night, I had been asleep on my side, with my face to the wall. Peter came into my bed and placed his arms around my stomach. I woke up, and the blankness of the wall made me dizzy. I could feel his pulse against my back. His body was warm, and his warmth melted something hidden behind the shadow of my soul. I never knew that merely laying in

bed could be so soothing. We fell asleep together.

Tracey wasn't the prettiest girl, and there was something about the way the light would bounce off her eyes and shine at me. One day, I asked her to write down the last time she cried. For two weeks, she kept asking the reason for my request. I told her that I couldn't imagine her shedding a tear about anything. She wrote several paragraphs about the death of her grandfather and how his death left a void.

Everyone admired Peter. He was friendly, and had an infectious smile that blurred his ignorance. Every girl I talked with had some sort of crush on him, mainly because of his boyish charm, crowned with his Christian purity. He never liked any of the girls back.

Peter and I used to talk all the time. I tried to convince him to go out with Mary, a strikingly beautiful girl from the all-girls college. She was also religious, despite the fact that her parents raised her as an atheist. Peter couldn't give an obvious reason why he didn't like her, despite the fact that she possessed all the qualities he wanted in a girlfriend. It occurred to me that Peter had created an unattainable mold of the ideal woman.

I tried to convince him to go out with Mary, a strikingly beautiful girl . . .

It was cold one night, and Peter lay in bed on the other side of the room, asleep. I thought I was drunk, but now, putting that night into context, I wasn't. I asked Peter if I could join him in his bed. He obliged. My pulse beat against his back, and my hands were around his stomach, and gradually I wandered lower, feeling what I felt months ago when he when he entered my bed. He hesitated, resisting in words but not physicaly.

Then he got up to go to the bathroom, and I noticed he had an erection. I heard a quiet but regular drubbing coming from down the hall, so I walked out of our room and listened. He was relieving the pressure I built up inside him. I walked back to our room, and got into my bed. He didn't utter a word when he returned.

When the semester ended, we moved out of our apartment, and parted ways. That fall we shared a class in a lecture hall. I would watch Peter. He was as I last remembered him, soft and supple—only now, with a new girlfriend. Tracey was in the front row with him. One day she saw me and smiled and nodded in my direction. I nodded back.

Sometimes, late at night, I open a window and stare out. I envy innocence, deadly as it seems. I still wonder why we parted ways. I still think of that first night when he was cold enough to ask me to get into my bed.

Juan Carlo Gaspar

858

In 858 we laughed, cried, and died. We threw our cigarettes out the window because the world was our ashtray.

We lived with an alcoholic once. She was old but so infantile in so many ways.

We looked at her with disgust. We drank with her. We tried to help her. We hated her. She wakes up daily drowning herself in vodka even before her morning-piss

And we too but only on weekends.

Today, passing by 858, I see something else; I see a beautiful story.

We lived with a Bipolar freak once. She threw a mug at my wrist that throbbed like Zeus striking down on mortals for being too greedy and vindictive.

I liked her but she was crazy.

Today, passing by 858, I wonder if she still needs to call her mom every time the sun goes down.

We lived with a pothead once. She did nothing but smoke and cook bacon in her underwear.

We'd smoke with her but she always hid in her room and once the door closed, we wouldn't see her til tomorrow.

We hated living there. The dilapidated floors matched the mice that would walk around the apartment as if they pay rent too.

The drug dealer downstairs who'd came upstairs bleeding, asking for help.

We hated each other.

Today, passing by 858, I feel together. You'd be surprised at how we can learn and grow from ANY experience.

After two years and ten roommates after, Ali and I look back and reminisce the now, what we call "good" times.

To grow is to see yourself truthfully. Without filter.

858 was a laboratory where we experimented with drugs and with our lives.

858 was a period I don't intend to revisit. But just like a photograph, it has sentimental values and epiphanies.

Megan Bennett

Adaptation

It was given a name to match the splendor it supposidly offered: Serenity. The city was far from living up to its name, but I believed in providing the occasional streak of hope to other citizens. I left the radio on and my windows open so all who passed by my apartment could hear Bing Crosby singing, a small contribution to the crumbling city of Serenity. I gathered my keys and put on my coat. The short hand on my bronze wristwatch crept towards seven, reminding me—as if I didn't already know—that I was late to work.

I clutched the door knob, closing the door behind me. I jiggled the knob to make sure it was locked—a habit learned from years of living here. A man in overalls limped over to me, favoring his right leg. He seemed to be waiting outside my apartment. I approached him.

"Hey, sir? You need any help?" He peered from beneath his worn bowler cap, scanning me excessively. His face was overgrown with stubble. Cheap alcohol lingered on his breath.

"Can yeh spare me some change, budday?"

I hesitated. He appeared unkempt, but he didn't look homeless. "I'm sorry, I don't have any to give."

Bing Crosby echoed the man's words; "*Why don't you remember, I'm your pal. Say buddy, can you spare a dime?*" I swallowed. The hair on my arms stood up.

He paused, rolling his tongue in his half-open mouth, scraping his yellowed teeth with it. His left eye appeared to have a permanent squint.

"Well that's sim'lar to wot the other guy said to me a few minutes ago," he sneered, tugging at his pant leg and shaking the change in his pocket.

Over his right shoulder I saw a man, reduced to a stiffening corpse. The drunken man revealed a crowbar. I gasped. My muscles tightened as my hand fumbled blindly for the doorknob behind me. I glanced across the street; silhouettes shifted in the windows.

"They ain't gonna' help you. Ain't no one gonna' help you, gehehehe." He breathed with ease. My pulse in my throat was fast and palpitating.

"Sir, please, I don't want any trouble here. I really don't have any money to spare," I bleated. He inched closer, waving the crowbar above his head. I trembled. "Y-you know how it is these days, no one has any change to just give you—"

He struck my chest with the crowbar. I stumbled to my knees, winded. I staggered up, leaning against my door for support. He struck again and I dodged him narrowly. His weapon had scraped my head. The world was spinning. Warm blood dripped down my face. He looked into my eyes, and twisted his lips into a violent grin.

"You're all jus' greedy bastards. All of ye!" He spat on the floor.

I looked around for something, anything. I crawled closer to the dead man, scanning him desperately for a weapon. A lead pipe peeked out from beneath him. I scrambled to the side where the pipe was. Pushing the body was like trying to move a man-sized sandbag. With all of my effort, I rolled him over, and for a moment, met his eyes. I forced myself to look away. I wasn't going to die like this. I yanked the pipe from under him and turned around just in time to dodge another blow from the crowbar. I swung at the man's legs, missing. I swept the pipe at him again. Clipped his left leg. He howled. He swung at me again, missing. I stood there, clutching the cold pipe, weighing it in my sweat-drenched paws, trying to anticipate his next move. He had a desperate look in his eyes, like something wild had taken over him. He lunged at me with his arm in a stabbing motion, hooking me in the ribs again. I paced, not letting the man leave my sight. Sweat pooled aroundn my eyes. I dove at the man, smashing his jaw with the bulky end of the pipe. He staggered. His glassy eyes were glowing with rage. His legs shook with anger. Blood streamed from his mouth.

"Why you've got som' nerve there—" he said.

Blood spread on the floor, haloing the skull that was intact moments ago.

I swung at him again, taking the advantage now. I couldn't stop swinging. I couldn't control myself. The man was on the ground, gargling blood and saliva, begging me to stop.

But I didn't stop beating him.

The lead pipe shattered his shoulder. "Hauuughh!" I slammed the pipe into his cheek. Blood flowed between his teeth.

"Pleese, scho-schtop!"

I smashed the pipe into his face.

"Puhl..plh.."

His jaw was unhinged, and he stopped moving.

My mouth twitched. Blood spread on the floor, haloing the skull that was intact moments ago. That other body was still there. My stomach churned. My ears tingled. I felt sick, alone. Blood soaked my shirt. I was one of *them.*

Panic clouded my thoughts. I had to think clearly. A heavily shrubbed area was to my left, concealed by the darkness of broken streetlights. I'd hide the bodies in the bushes. *For now at least,* I thought.

I dragged the man I killed by the arms across the blood-soaked cement, struggling with the dead weight. It was as if his body was trying to stay connected to the ground. His back scraped against the rough cement, dredging the gravel and dirt.

I hauled the other body into the bushes and stumbled back to my apartment

I spread the bushes and heaved him into a dense area. I staggered. Someone would have to notice the blood on the ground. I hauled the other body into the bushes and stumbled back to my apartment, the battered lead pipe still clenched in my hand.

A week-old newspaper hung over the arm of my leather lounger, *Serenity Tribune* scrawled across the top in elegant letters. A lone coffee mug glared at me from across the room. A caramel-brown ring stained its inside. I put the bloody pipe on the table. My head throbbed, and the open gash on my forehead still wept fresh blood.

I pressed a damp cloth to my forehead and picked up my rotary telephone and slammed it back down. I had no one to call. I sat for a while listening the radio.

Days passed. I hid in my apartment. There were no phone calls, not even from work. I wouldn't be surprised if I'd been replaced already. The cut on my forehead scabbed and had begun to peel.

I looked at my pictureless walls with regret. Both the walls and I would stay here and be empty forever, I thought. The lead pipe was still resting on the table exactly where I'd put it days before.

When I was getting ready to move to Serenity, my father told me "Son, I don't care what nobody tells ya'. There will always be rich people, and there will always be poor people. Anyone that tries to tell ya' different is out to brainwash ya'."

He was right. I picked up the pipe, closed my windows, turned off the radio and went outside.

John Burns

A Girl I Used to Love

I saw a woman and her mother eating breakfast. While not entirely remarkable, something stood out in her features. A heavy set and older woman had been sitting and blocking my view across the shop. The woman had shifted to her left and opened a lane of sight. She didn't entirely look like a whole person. It seemed that only facets of her were apparent, highlighted against the rest of her.

Her subtle chin ran across the breadth of her face moving into her jawline and up past her short curved ears and into her hair. It was tied up in a loose bun behind her head, confining the wild mahogany locks. I was enchanted. Thought of the girl I used to love undoing the bun, letting each strand drop around her head and neck, draped over her shoulder. I feel each bunch of hairs around my fingers, letting the coarseness of my skin be soothed by the soft, silken tresses.

The plaster shattered when the woman across the shop pulled the bun taught. But as her hand fell, I noticed her nails. They were bright tangerine color on the tips and the white on the bottom halves. She had an affinity for flashy colors, I could see. Her skin was sun kissed.

Locked onto the woman's hands I hardly noticed the waitress placing my eggs benedict in front of me. Only the clack of the plate against the table top snapped me back into focus with a full body twitch.

I turned and nodded and forced a smile. She had moved back into the kitchen and absently my eyes followed her. Meanwhile the older, weighty woman shifted back and obstructed my view.

I took a sloppy mess of breakfast up. A glob of hollandaise sauce hung on the corner of my mouth. As my tongue retrieved it, I imagined the brush of her index finger against my lip. She pulled it up before me and back to her own mouth, straight into the center of her tongue. Laughing with her mouth closed, I remember frowning playfully and becoming her lovey-dovey puppet. She then sighed and picked up a strawberry from her waffle, scooping whipped cream onto it and then placed it into my mouth. When I bit down she pulled away slightly, grinning like a cat before letting me enjoy the rest of the fruit.

She wanted my love, but she didn't want me. I suppose I was there as a place holder.

She often told me not to waste anything, to remeber those less fortunate. She usually said this when there were but a few drops left in her glass; the rest of the pint being worked through her body, through her organs and in her bloodstream. Then she'd giggle and hail the purveyor of alcohol, whomever they would be and have another round sent over.

I managed to swallow a couple of mouthfuls of my breakfast and mixed the rest around enough to make it seem like I made a hearty go at the meal. The weighty woman had shifted again. I tried peering around her, but she was insurmountable and I felt hopeless. However, after a few moments of fidgeting in her seat and complaining in hushed tones to her companion, their association was unknown to me. They called one of the Brazilian girls over for the check. I wanted to push the girl to move faster as she made her way over to the table.

Once the tab was paid with a meager tip, those two heavy diners shuffled off in labored steps towards the door. Freeing my eyes from the visual sores that they were, I went back to her. Much to my surprise she was now holding a young girl in her arms. It was unmistakable that it was her daughter. The curls, the eyes, the nose, it was all from her mother.

I became transfixed. I had often wondered what my girl's daughter would look like when she was my girl. I wondered if I could've given her a daughter, if I could've stomached the burden of family life. Not that she wanted that, but I had to wonder if I could have given her anything she may have wanted. It was impossible though. There would be no way for me to give her everything that she wanted. She wanted freedom and she wanted me close. She wanted to sleep alone and to cuddle against my body.

She tolerated the things that I did. She accepted me, never asked me to

change. We would drink together and on rare occasions trouble found us as if we were waiting for it. She never shied away from it or tried to hide.

In the end there was one main issue. She wanted my love, but she didn't want me. I suppose I was there as a place holder. To comfort her when she cried, to be her white knight, while the other knights were away. But I think when she saw what was under my armor there wasn't anything that she needed. When I became human, she lost all interest in me.

I suppose it was partially my fault. I told her stories of my travels. I made her laugh, heartily, to the very point of snorting through her nose; at first she would be embarrassed, but then came to laugh through it all. She seemed infallible.

As I looked at the woman across the room, and the girl in her arms, I started to see resentment in her eyes. She was young, but sapped of energy. The girl was a reminder of this, the loss of her freedom. Maybe she was a reminder of her father, the man that left her with the child. Maybe I was the kind of man that could manage to be a father and stay a father.

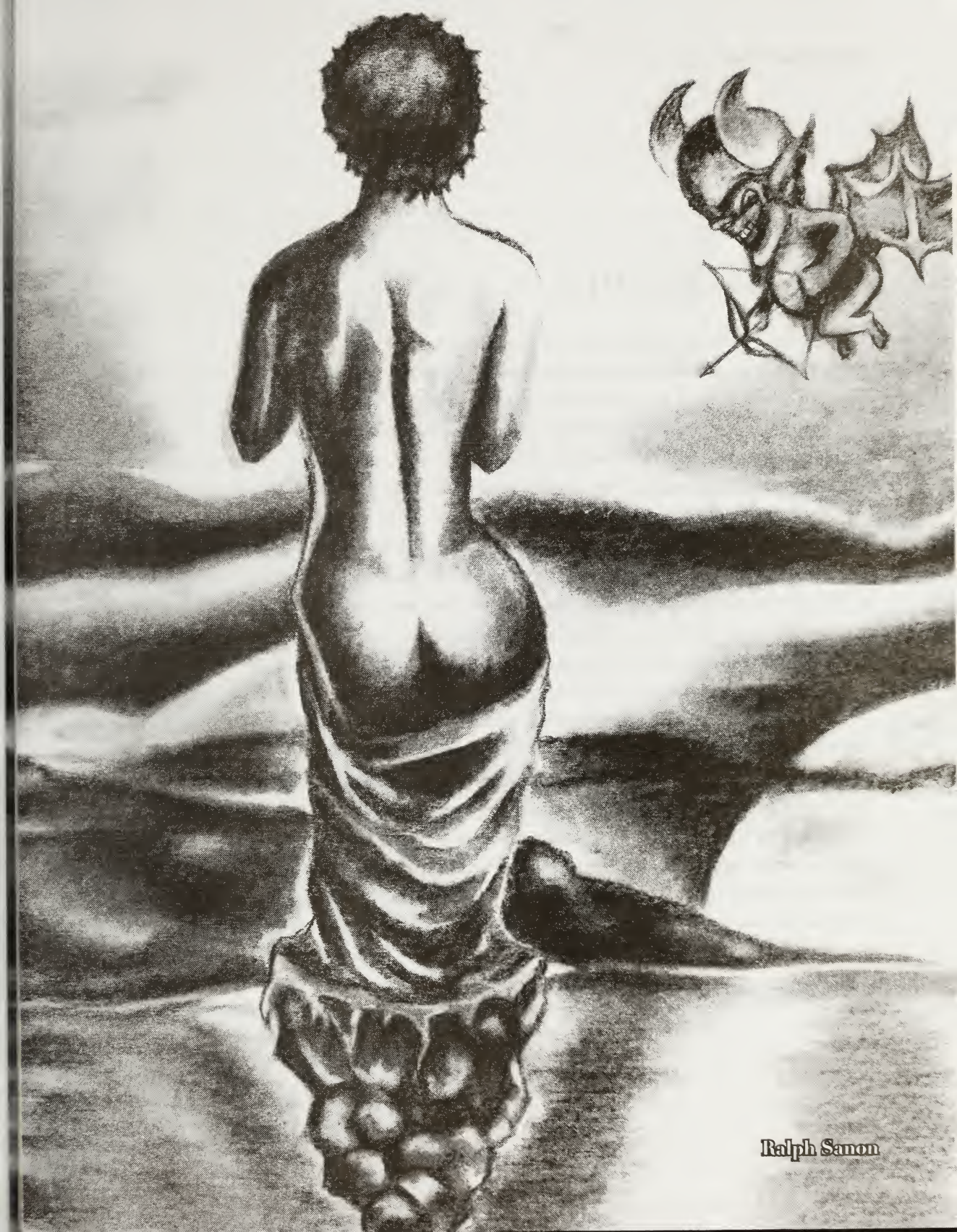
"Are you all done?" The cinnamon waitress stood next to me, a weary hand on a canted hip.

"Yes. Thank you."

I handed her my plate and she placed the check in front of me. When I looked back across the shop, I saw the woman with the girl in her arms stand up. I saw the strength in her arms. Walking around the table, she had no swagger in her hips. She carried the weight of a child and not the eyes of the room. There was an absence of youth in her, a loss in livelihood. She was a woman, both in demeanor and in her responsibility. She was not the girl I used to love.

LILLESAND
bed frame series, floor model

It's a wintry mix day at Ikea,
we've map in hand but no good idea
where to begin after Swedish meatballs.
Bellies full, hands clasped, we wander vast halls,
draw crimson drapes here, test kitchen sinks there,
try kiddie toys. The whole thing has the air
of Fisher Price for grownups. Stalls and floors
of things we still can play with, no front doors
to seal us in. Most weird to examine
consummation beds with strangers. You win
foreign smiles mocking the bed model's name,
what was that, a Flärkö? It's not the same
as trying the bed, which we all want to
do, stop fingering pillows, come on, my you,
stop testing chairs in this bed paradise,
lay with me here, it would be oh so nice,
come collapse here, the bed seems just lonely
oh touch me but dear honey just only
quietly just only under my coat
this lush public bed so neglects to note
that we can't test it for another use
beyond the puritanical snooze.


Ralph Sanon

Jacqueline Perry

October 20, 2010

Do you want a heartwarming story of when I was a girl?
Baby, I could spend days reminiscing 'bout my 2-mile-wide world
Rows of white houses, and sidewalks, and big grassy backyards
But darling, ice cream and ballet class only gets me so far.
Is this what I am? That old American Dream?
What with my TVs, peanut butter, and designer jeans?

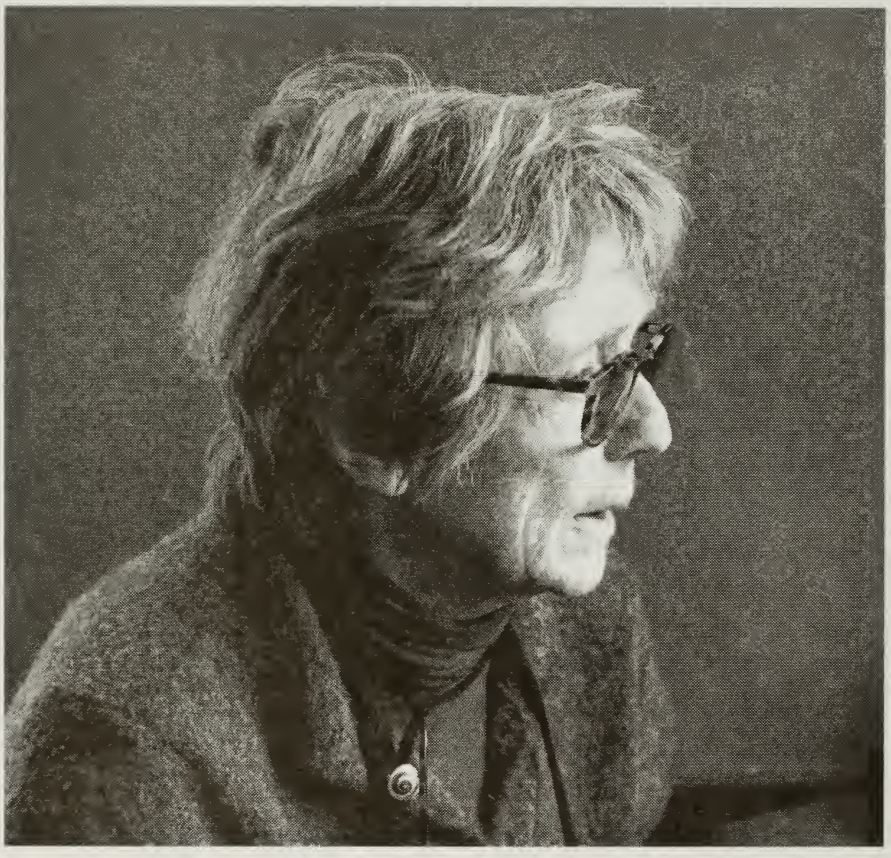
Honey, I come from the men who died long before my birth
But that didn't stop them from leaving their families and sailing halfway across the earth
Is this what Great-grandfather pictured, a hundred years before
Twelve-hour days at the laundry, trying to send home a little more
Alone in a foreign country, just to give the unborn a foot in the door?

And grandmother, you always kissed me and tucked me in at night
Held my hand and watched my favorite films, made sure I was all right
Brought me teddy bears and candy, wiped my tears until they dried
Yet I came home each night to crayons, never knew what it means to cry.
I wasn't there that winter morning, when planes flew overhead
And you slept trembling in a bomb shelter, while your neighbors were struck dead.
Were you scared to pack up and leave the city when your family decided to run
And your own grandmother jumped to grave in a cold lake, for fear of all the guns?

So yeah, that's right, hun, I could tell you 'bout my lunchbox days
My pigtailin', jump-ropin', swingsettin' ways.
Or I could write about the innocent, gunned down in back alleys, how—
If I paint a pretty picture of that, would this be poetry now?
For every family story I can offer, there's a hundred more from people I'll never meet
While I was sipping soda cans, their broken liquor bottles lined the street
And while I cherished Mom's homecooked soup, each ounce lovingly stirred
Families of sunken bones collapsed overseas, their cries never heard.
But these are stories I'll never know, people I'll never see—
All I know's where I come from, not where I'm going.
And sweetie, in truth, all this so-called "poetry" I say
Is just a little girl's words—do they make a difference in any way?
So I cling to the past—but then I let it go.
For it might be cliché, but what lies ahead—I'll never know.
I swallow the stories of my blood, carry them with me always
God knows how much those before me made me who I am today—
But then I take a deep breath, look ahead, and am on my own way.

Interview by Caleb Nelson

Writing, a Perspective



"If you keep doing anything, whatever it is . . . it is a form of meditation."

Fanny Howe grew up in the wake of World War Two, in an artsy and enlightened home. Her mom founded the Poets Theater and produced the early work of W.B Yeats, Frank O'Hara and John Ashbery among other notable writers. Her dad taught constitutional law at Harvard and campaigned for civil rights. Growing up among artists and activists prepared Howe for a long career of exploring and illuminating the spider-webbed crevices of American life and society.

Photos by Darius Johnson

Since publishing her first collection of short stories in the late 60s, Howe has written over twenty volumes of poetry, twelve works of fiction, two memoirs and six young-adult books. Her resume is extensive, but she speaks softly and looks simple—from her basic glasses right down to her earth-toned shoes. After dropping out of Stanford she embraced a poet's life of poverty.

There's nothing that she pretends to know. She exudes wonder, and nationally she is recognized as one of a small group of avant-garde feminist writers who approach life and literature as explorers rather than as explainers.

In the fall of 2012 Howe joined UMass Boston's Creative Writing Program as its inaugural visiting writer. Early this spring, she arrived at Algiers Coffee House in Harvard Square to chat over hot chocolate.

What was the first thing you got published?

The first thing I had published was in the college magazine. But the first exciting thing was one of my pulpy novels, which I wrote to make money when I was a college dropout and I didn't have a penny. I was already writing bad novels and I sent one to an agent who said, "try writing one of these." And he sent me a little packet of the kind of genera pulp that was called "Sweet Nurse Books." They're about nurses. So I wrote three of those, and that was actually the best apprenticeship. I got published, and I got a tiny bit of money but it was good to do that.

Then I published poems, first in the "Atlantic Monthly," I think it was the first, and then Houghton Mifflin did a collection of my stories when I was twenty-seven or twenty-eight. Now as I look back, I think I was quite young actually. At the time I just was so terrified of the world. I never was good at hustling or trying to get my things out or anything like that, so it was a miracle that anything ever did.

How did you find so much energy to do so much writing and to get so much of it published?

I'm only happy writing. I mean I'm either thinking, writing or playing with children. Those are the three things I like to do. So there's nothing about oh what a hard worker I am or anything. That's when I am happy.

What's your writing process?

I always have written by hand. I always have a notebook and a pen, so if you were late I would be madly writing. So I just carried a notebook. Then I would, about two weeks later, look casually back to see what was in that notebook and I'd be amazed. I hadn't even thought, had no consciousness when I was doing it.

Then I would use those sound patterns and breath patterns to make something like a song or whatever you want to call it, out of those random materials. So it was partly randomness that interested me. The chance thing comes through you. So I don't ever feel I really own what I'm doing until after I've done this, and I've been working on it, and even then I'm depending on lightening bolts.

When did you decide you wanted to be a writer?

When I was a child. I grew up in a very literary household, so it was always a possibility. There were always books around me, and also I was very bad at school, and hated school, so I developed a strong private life, which I felt nobody could say was right or wrong. When I was about fourteen I committed myself to it. It was like becoming a nun or something. I just said that this is what I'm going to do with my life.

You've written so many different kinds of things. You've written short stories and poems and essays and novels. How would you classify yourself and your work?

I think of myself as a poet, because I am not very good at story telling. I'm much more stream of consciousness kind of writer, and whatever is redeemable about my novels comes out of having been writing poetry all those years. So the poetry is the template out of which all those other things come, all the other writing. So I always encourage prose writers to write poems, and to take it seriously.

Do you prefer writing poems?

No. I love writing all kinds of prose too, but I couldn't do it without being so attuned to language, and to words. That's what the poetry gives me is that attention to every sound of every word.

What do you enjoy reading, or what have you been reading lately?

That changes all the time. But I read a lot of philosophy, and for years I read theology. For about ten to fifteen years I was just reading that.

Also I read poetry by my friends, who are poets, and sometimes someone asks me to blurb their book, often a young person, and then I read those manuscripts. But I don't go out to buy books of poems or novels anymore. I used to, but I don't anymore. I like reading people's ideas, and then I re-read old books that I've already loved.

There is so much good stuff to read already. Do you think that there is any space for more writing?

I understand that question, believe me.

Sometimes that can be an overwhelming question, and you just feel crushed, like at that AWP meeting (The Association of Writers and Writing Programs had a conference in Boston this Spring). That would be enough to make you just never do anything. Horrifying. Thousands of writers.

Somebody said to me the other day, you have to keep doing it so other people won't give up, which seems like a good enough answer. There has to be that path available and if everybody panicked and stopped, that would be the end of it all.

What changes about writers and their writing from generation to generation? I mean, in the history of literature, what's different?

It seems to go through cycles of becoming more socially engaged, like Thackeray or Trollope and Dickens, social satire, and in our time it would be Mailer and those guys. But before then there were people who were telling fables. The writing was more sparse and abstract and I think now we're moving back toward an abstract period again. It seems to be as usual, a kind of back and forth thing in the end.

I mean that's really generalizing. Some of my favorite writers are the most given over to description, like Thomas Hardy. I love his novels, but I myself would rather write a very short ones. So I think that's sort of cycles.

How has your writing process changed over the years?

Oh, well when I gave up smoking it changed. My concentration changed. So just changing a habit. Smoking. I couldn't sit for as long, because you

know how nice it is to sit and smoke. Once I gave that up then I didn't want to sit at the table very long, so I began writing in shorter more intense blocks. But that was also because I had heaps of children all over me, so my attention span was very limited to the kids, and that's why poetry was probably more manageable. But I did go on writing novels throughout all of that, and I loved it. I loved having another world, living two lives at once. I was always dreaming about what the characters would do the next day.

How did your childhood experiences affect your writing?

I wasn't very good at expressing myself through my mouth so I figured out how to do it otherwise. I would sit writing all the time. Doing something that nobody else could tell you was good or bad was important.

I was exposed to a lot of beauty, so I wanted to produce beauty. That's probably the biggest reason.

Have your views on politics or social justice changed over the years?

I've basically stayed a communist from the beginning. I would say liberation theology was very important to me - the socialist catholic movement. I really haven't changed my feelings at all about how out of balance everything is.

What is the most valuable experience that you've had for your writing?

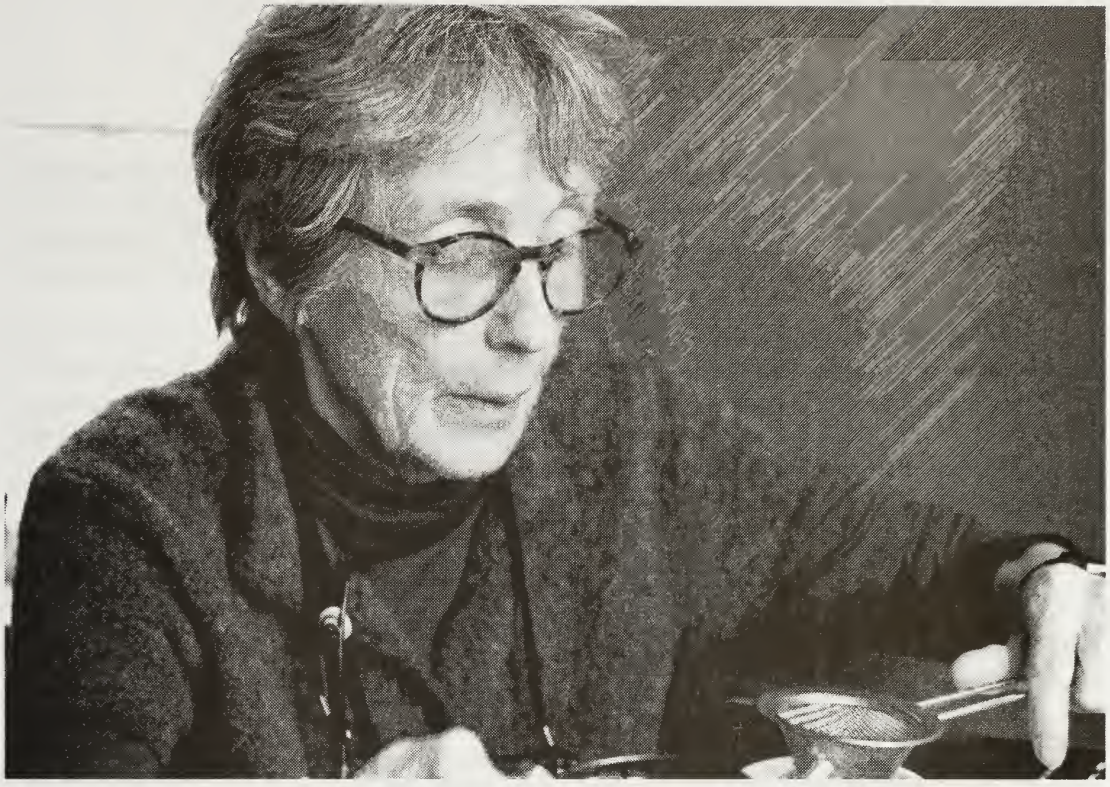
You mean in terms of the writing itself?

In terms of personal experience, what's influenced you?

Those are all the time. I mean everything, the whole experience of living.

I made some videos when I was teaching at UCSD with a graduate student who helped me with the editing. That influenced me because I learned about cutting and pasting and moving things around. The whole rhythm of film editing made a big impact on me and sort of did change the way I would think of pages. My last novel, *Indivisible*, is about a filmmaker, and I use a lot of those shapes and techniques.

Also, if you keep doing anything, whatever it is, it's almost like a yoga discipline, even if it isn't all of the exercises it is a form of meditation. It does change you to keep doing the same thing, losing yourself in something else. It changes the way you think.



How does what you hoped to be as a writer, when you were young, compare to what you have become, and what you hope to be as a writer now?

It probably hasn't changed that much. I still am a devotee of beauty. I just want to write something really good, but really good now more than ever means true. I side with Keats, "Truth is beauty, beauty truth."

I'm pretty harsh as a critic now, probably harsher than I used to be. I demand more from movies and books.

In what way?

It has to have this scepter around it of someone who's really onto something else, who's not just infatuated with the text. But who sees something beyond it. I guess I'm sort of like interested in the edge of things. What's the next? Is there another world?

~ Contributors ~

Jacob Aguiar is a fairly average 22 year old white college student born and bred in New England.

Osahon Aimiuwu is a sophomore at UMass Boston, Econ major, creative writing minor, Nigerian, and all round awesome guy.

Allan-Michael Brown has contributed his writing and photography to local blog sites. Most of his writing focuses on examining behavior from alternative perspectives.

John Burns is a graduate student in the English Master's program. He writes mainly short stories, but wrote a one act play that was performed at the Student Playwright's Festival this past March.

Rick Chason is a junior majoring in English and Theater and minoring in Creative Writing and Music Theory. He hopes to pursue an MFA in Musical Theater Writing and a PhD in Theater.

Nick Dayal lives in Dorchester with five stoned roommates, and will be graduating from UMass Boston this Spring. He is looking forward to continuing to expand on his writing, drinking, and prairie dog communication skills in the years to follow.

Paul Driskill, 23, works for the student newspaper, will graduate Spring 2013. He enjoys writing, reading, playing frisbee, and occasional shenanigans. He looks forward to a long career of not making very much money.

Carlos Echeverria was raised in Boston, Massachusetts and currently works with the homeless. Carlos uses his passion for Photography to capture and retell stories of everyday life in Boston.

Welina Farah, sociology enthusiast, tea aficionado, and hospitality employee, is a Lebanese Bostonian doing things her way.

Lawrence Gillette is an aspiring artist and writer from Quincy, MA. His work can be found on the racks of local comic shops, scrawled on UMass desks, and the backs of outlaw bikers.

Midori Gleason is an English MA student at UMB, whose current focus is on writing poems. In her free time she draws pictures and plays the mandolin very badly.

Aaron Griffin writes essays, short stories, lyrics and poetry and hopes for a career in writing. He is a sophomore at UMass Boston

Ivana Ivanova was born in Bulgaria and has lived in the US for more than 15 years. She is a pre-med freshman at UMass Boston.

Corinne Jager lives for hyacinths, good friends, ambitious bike rides, and adventures to the uncharted. She studied philosophy and cognitive science at UMass Boston.

Varenn Larose studies English and Communications at UMass Boston, and hopes to work in publishing when she graduates. She loves laughing, nature, reading books and time with family.

~ Contributors ~

Natasha Leullier has a master's degree in archaeology and works as an editorial assistant. She recently began writing creatively, focusing on the fantasy genre.

Daniel Mulcahy grew up outside of Boston, the youngest of three. Writing has been his passion from an early age—writing stories about anything he could think of, creating entire worlds to get lost in.

Christine Norton was born and raised in South Boston, and still lives there. Over the years she has had many pieces published in various small publications, and continues to hone her skills.

Laura Patten is an English Major at UMass Boston. Bust is the first poem she has ever written.

Abigail Poirier, 19, Biology major with a focus in Pre Med, plans to one day work with an organization like Doctors Without Borders (MSF), loves the study of the human body, and finds inspiration in discovery.

Alexis Sherman is in her second year as a post-bac pre-med student at UMass Boston. She previously studied international relations and has traveled throughout the Middle East. Her hobbies include photography, art, and sports.

Christina Spinelli is an undergraduate English student at UMass Boston. She knows three amateur magic tricks and hopes to one day, somehow, become the Postmaster General of the United States.

Fatima Teixeira is a junior majoring in English with a concentration in creative writing. She enjoys writing short stories, plays, and is currently working on a novel.

Teresa Yeh is a current undergraduate student at UMass Boston and freelance photographer who has worked in the United States, China, Taiwan, Bangkok, Rwanda and Palestine. For more information, please check out her website at: www.teresayeh.com

Jenn Tonelli is a Master's student at UMass Boston studying English and Creative Writing. Besides writing, she has a passion for reading, baking, anything British, and everything from the 1920's era.

Kim Soun Ty was raised in Massachusetts and is currently an active member in the Boston Asian American Community. Her writing is inspired by her need to reclaim voice and to challenge the social issues and injustices that have affected her personal life.

Kisa Zhang is a young self-taught artist who is still learning to push the boundaries of different ideals in beauty and perfection. She is from San Francisco, California and is planning on going to medical school one day.

~ Further Contributors ~

Christopher Bishop
Raphael Bliss
Kara Wooten
Consuelo J. Perez
Michael Kirchick
Joannie Ortiz
Marcus Duviella
Paula Ridenti
Rhode Mirma Viljean
Jacqueline Perry
Melissa Bass
Juan Carlo Gaspar
Benjamin Devonshire
Gleb Dozorets
Ralph Sanon
Michela West

The Watermark Signature Awards

Sponsored by Narrow Way Plumbing and Heating

This spring The Watermark presented its Signature Awards to recognize the best work printed in four categories: fiction, non-fiction, poetry and visual arts. Winners recieved a $100 cash prize, sponsored by Narrow Way Plumbing and Heating of Dorchester. The English Department's Professor Joseph Torra selected the winning submissions. The awards were announced at The Watermark's release party in May.

Signature Short Story – From the forty-two fiction submissions we received this spring, we printed seventeen. We chose the stories in this volume because they captured our imaginations, and kept us absorbed right through to the end.

Signature Article – Of the eleven submissions for this award, we chose six to print—five articles and one essay. The winning article was chosen based on its execution and impact.

Signature Poem – We selected twenty-two entries for this award from the one hundred and thirty eight poetry submissions received this spring. We chose the poems in this volume based on their emotional impact and cadence. There's no true science to these decisions. We print the poems that best move our minds and our emotions.

Signature Visual Art Series – For this award we printed eleven out of the twenty-nine visual art submissions received this spring. The Editors of this journal chose the winner based on the aesthetics, originality and continuity of the project.

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